

OF THE
CONVERSION
OF
SINNERS
TO

God in Christ:

The { 1. Necessity, } { 3. Means,
 { 2. Nature, } { 4. Signs of it:

WITH

A concluding SPEECH to the
UNCONVERTED.

By MARTIN FYNCH a Servant of
Christ in the Work of the Gospel.

*Except a man be born again he cannot see the Kingdom
of God; John 3. 3.*

*Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be
blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from
the presence of the Lord; Acts 3. 19.*

*Then will I teach transgressors thy ways, and sinners shall
be turned unto thee; Psalm 51. 13.*

L O N D O N,
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the Phoenix in S. Paul's Church-yard, 1680.



TO THE
INHABITANTS
OF
Great GRIMSBY
IN THE
COUNTY of LINCOLN,
Salvation in Christ Jesus our
LORD.

I*t is said of Paul when he was at Athens, his spirit was stirred when he saw the City wholly given to Idolatry. Act. 17. 17. The Servants of Christ are to have their Spirits stirred with a Holy Zeal for God, and with bowels of compassion to*

to the Reader.

the Souls of men; when they see People wholly given to ignorance and profaness. That is a good stirring of our Spirits, and from the Holy Spirit of God, to endeavour to turn men from darkness unto light, and from the power of Satan unto God. Charity to the Souls of Men is the highest Charity; those that know the terrour of the Lord, and what a fearful thing it is to fall into the hands of the living God should be very earnest to perswade men to flee from the wrath to come, if by any means they may be instruments in Christs hand to save some: This small Treatise written in your Town, and much for your sakes, I dedicate unto you as a Testimony of my love to your souls; I write not unto you about controversies and about lesser things, my design is higher, that is, to shew the necessity of the New Birth; and the Nature thereof. If Persons be truly converted from Sin to Christ; though they may erre and mistake in somethings about the manner

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manner of the outward worship of God in this World, God will sooner or later reveal it unto them, or however Pardon it to them through his grace in Christ, so that those mistakes shall not hinder their Salvation. But if persons be never so right in the outward way of their profession and worship, and yet be strangers to a work of grace and conversion upon their hearts, they cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.

There are two sorts of Persons especially, with whom I have to do in this Treatise ; First those that think that the practise of some formalities and outward things will bring them to Heaven without a work of grace and conversion upon their Souls. If men think that the being of this or that Church, and being of this or that way of outward profession of Religion, will bring them to everlasting Life, whilst in the meantime they are grossly ignorant of the things of God ; of loose and licentious lives or unacquainted with a Sanctifying change wrought by the Spirit of God

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to the Reader.

upon their Souls, let them consider what is written in this Book, to undeceive them, and shew them what of necessity must be done, or else they are undone for ever. The second sort that I deal with in this Treatise are those who though they are for devotion, strictness of Life and a change of mens Spirits and ways, yet carry it no further then a kind of Civility, Moral vertues and reformation of life produced by a meer awe of a Deity and fear of Hell without the true knowledge of Christ and faith in him; In true Conversion there is a coming to Christ, a receiving of Christ, a being Sanctified by Faith in him. Christ is little known as the justifier and Sanctifier too of lost and sinful man. Christ is made use of by many, but as upon the by, and for fashion-sake both in the matter of justification, and in the business of conversion; therefore it is the design of this Treatise to lead men to a more distinct knowledg of Christ, and that they may see how God bleisseth us with all spiritual blessings, in heavenly things

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things in him. I have not adorned this discourse after the manner of some, I Study to set forth the things of God to the meanest capacity. I wish what I have written were yet more plain and easier to be understood. Now that the God of all grace would bless what I have written to the furtherance of your salvation, and to the everlasting good of others, who shall peruse it, is the prayer of

Your Servant

in Christ,

MARTIN FYNCH.

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THE
NECESSITY
OF
Conversion.

CHAP. I.

Of the Necessity of Conversion.

BEfore I open the *Nature of Conversion*, it is requisite that I should speak something of the *Necessity* thereof.

This Proposition therefore I lay down;
That every Man by Nature is so Degenerated
from God, so utterly corrupted and tainted by
Sin, so prone to all Evil, so opposite to God
and all that is spiritually good, that except he

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be Converted and Changed; he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.

There is a twofold Misery come upon us by our Fall in Adam:

First, The loss of the Favour of God.

Secondly, The loss of the Image of God in Holiness and Righteousness.

First, We have lost the Favour of God by Sin, so that as we are by Nature the Children of wrath, Ephes. 2. 3. God is angry with us, Plal. 7. 11. We are under the Curse of his holy Law, Galat. 3. 10. The Law curseth us for Original Sin: the Law curseth us for Actual Sins. The Law pronounceth the Sinner to be vile and abominable to God: to be such a One as his Soul hath no pleasure in, but will bring into Judgment and punish according to all the Evil that he hath done to provoke the Eyes of his Glory.

Now from this part of our Misery we are recovered by the Grace of Justification, which is an act of Gods free Grace, whereby he forgives a poor Sinner for Christs sake all Trespases, and imputeth the perfect and glorious righteousness of Christ as our Mediator and Surety to make him pure, clean, and without spot in his sight.

This great Article of Religion is held forth in such Scriptures as these: In the Lord shall

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shall all the house of Israel be justified, and shall glory, Isa. 45. 25. This is the Name whereby he shall be called, (speaking of Jesus Christ) The Lord our righteousness, Jer. 23. 6. Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption which is in Jesus Christ, Rom. 3. 23. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, Rom. 4. 5, 6. But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who is made of God unto us wisdom and righteousness, and sanctification and redemption, 1 Cor. 1. 30.

Most excellently doth the holy Scripture set forth this Point, telling us, That there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus; that their Sins are blotted out, remembered no more, cast into the depths of the Sea; not imputed unto them, cast behind Gods back; and that in Christ Believers are righteous, all fair, and no spot in them. God beholding them cloathed and beautified in the best Robe, the Garment of Salvation: he is not ashamed to be called their God, and their Father, but taketh them near unto him, to stand before him for ever.

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The Lords marrying of a Soul to Christ, by giving us Faith in him, doth actually acquit us from the debt of Sin : Christ our heavenly Husband answereth all. As we need no more to bring us into an actual state of Condemnation, but that we come to be actually in the *first Adam*; so we need no more to our *actual Justification*, then that we be actually in Christ the *second Adam*, who is a root of *Justification*, and communicateth *Righteousness* to all that are in him.

As there is a *Fountain* and *first Union* between *Adam* and his *Posterity* in the *Covenant of Works* : So there is a *Fountain* and *first Union* between *Christ* and the *Elect* in the *Covenant of Redemption*. And as *Wrath* and *Condemnation* stand ready to seize upon us, as soon as we come to be actually in *Adam*, because of what he hath done in our own room, as our Head and public Person : So *Life* and *Justification* stand ready to be bestowed upon the *Elect* as soon as they come to be actually in *Christ*, because of what he hath done and suffered in their room and stead.

As we are not actually in *Adam* till we come to be quickned in the Womb of *Nature* : So we are not actually in *Christ*, till we come to be quickned in the Womb of *Grace*.

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As when we come actually to have imputed to us the *Guilt of Adams Sin*, we have an inherent *taint and corruption* of our *Nature* from him: So when we come to have the *Righteousness of Christ* actually imputed to us, we have *inherent Grace and Sanctification* of our *Nature* from him. So that as the *first Adam* is the Root both of *Condemnation* and *Corruption* to us: So the *second Adam* is the Root both of *Justification* and *Sanctification* to us.

When the Scripture saith, *We are justified by Faith*, it is not meant that we are justified by it as a *work or quality*, but that by this *Grace of Faith* we receive *Christ* who justifies us.

The *Righteousness* by which we are justified, is a *righteousness* without us: the *righteousness* of another, wrought by another, inherent in another; it is the *righteousness* of *Christ, God-Man*. That *Robe of Righteousness* which covers our Sins, is put on by *Faith*, and we wear it here and for ever in *Heaven*: But though it be upon us (as the *Apostle* speaketh) the *righteousness* of *God* which is by faith in *Jesus Christ*, is unto all and upon all them that believe, *Rom. 3. 22*. Yet it is never inherent in us, but only imputed to us.

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No man under Heaven hath a perfect Legal righteousness of his own to justify him, therefore he must have an Evangelical righteousness that is a righteousness that answers the Law, but is brought to light by the Gospel. No man hath a righteousness of his own to justify him, therefore he must have the righteousness of another even the righteousness of Jesus our Lord.

Justification is perfect when we first believe in Christ, though not as to our participation of all the joy and comfort, and blessed effects of it; so it extends it self to everlasting, yet 'tis perfect in it self, because the righteousness of Christ which we receive in our first believing, is a perfect righteousness: we never have any other to justify us at Gods Bar; neither do we need any other. We rejoyce and glory more and more in the righteousness of Christ, are more taken with this best Robe, and are more thankful for it: But this Robe of righteousness that covers Sins, and makes us lovely in the eyes of the Lord, is the same for ever.

Justification and Sanctification must by no means be confounded: The Grace of Justification is for one purpote, the Grace of Sanctification for another. Justification is for the taking away of the guilt of sin; Sanctification
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for the taking away of the filth and power of it. *Justification* brings us into a state of favour and acceptance with God; *Sanctification* is to enable us to walk suitable to this New and happy Estate.

The Lord Jesus is not our *Half-Saviour*, and works the other half, or any part of a Saviour; but Christ is *All* in this business. There is a washing of *Regeneration*, which is also from Christ our Saviour, Titus, 3. 5. But this is of another nature, and to other ends and purposes than the washing of *Justification*. Not only Ministers, but all Believers should labour to have a clear and distinct knowledge of the *Doctrine of Justification*, for it is our *Life*. When the Apostle James saith, That Abraham was justified by works, the meaning is, That he was approved, declared and manifested to be a true Believer by his works.

When the Holy Scriptures speaks of the Lords giving rewards and eternal life, upon working and obedience. Those Scriptures must be understood declaratively, not casually, that is as noting, and declaring who are the persons to whom he gives eternal life, and not as shewing the cause thereof, for that is only his free grace in Christ. Likewise those Scriptures shew the certain con-

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nexion that there is between *Grace* and *Glory*, that where the Lord freely gives *Glory* hereafter, there he gives *Grace* here. What is *Glory* in heaven for the substance of it, but *Grace*, *Holiness* and *Communion* with God perfected: So that such Scriptures hold forth no more but this, *That whom the Lord justifies freely by his Grace in Christ, and sanctifieth in him, he trains them up in holiness, obedience, and fellowship with him, until he brings them to the fulness of that, which at first they have but the last and the first fruits of.*

So that when afterwards in this Discourse I speak of a *saving work of the Spirit* wrought in those whom the Lord bringeth unto life. You must not think that this *work of Regeneration* is the matter of our *Justification*. By *Grace* we are saved, freely by *Grace* through the *Redemption* which is in *Jesus Christ our Lord*. The *work of Conversion*, and the *Graces of the Spirit* wrought in us, do only accompany *Salvation*, as the *Apostle* speaketh, *Hebr. 6. 9.* are wrought in those that are saved, and go along with them, and accompany them to *Heaven*: Yea, those *Graces* for the substance leave them not, when they have accompanied them thither, but are perfected here. But
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the work of Conversion is called a *saving work of the Spirit*, because it is wrought in all them, and onely in them who are saved by the *free grace of God in Christ*.

Now my way will be clearer to proceed.

Secondly, We have, as we are in the state of *Nature* lost the *Image of God*, consisting in *spiritual knowledge, holiness and righteousness*. *Regeneration* is wrought in those that are saved, to deliver them from this part of their *Misery*. Man was at first made upright, made in the *Image of God*, in respect of those *spiritual and heavenly Endowments* he was furnished with. But it is otherwise with us by our *Fall*; our *Understanding* is darkned like *Sampson*, our *Eyes* are put out.

That glimmering of light to know that there is a *God*, and that some things are evil and some things good, seems rather to be a *new Gift of God*, and *common Illumination of the Spirit* since the *Fall of Adam*, to be some curb and restraint to Sin in the World, then any remainder of *Gods Image*, which was upon us in our *first Creation*. For the peace of *Gods Church*, for the benefit of humane Society, and such like reasons, God bestows this *common illumination and conviction* upon

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upon men, without which this World would be like *Hell*, and men would be like *Devils*.

Marvel not at this saying, *that men would be so vile*, if it were not for this *common illumination of the Spirit*, and *common light* that God giveth to the Sons of Men; seeing the *Nature of Man* is wholly corrupted, and the thoughts of his heart are evil, and onely evil, and that continually.

A dangerous mistake it is of the people commonly called *Quakers*, that they make the heeding and attending to this *common light* to be *Conversion*, (which thing is to be found among many sober Heathens.) But it is not to be much wonder'd at in that *People*, seeing they are generally very *Ignorant*, even of the very *Fundamentals of Religion*. 'Tis true, this *common light* is a great *Gift of God* to the World, to keep up some *Peace and Order*, and *common honesty* amongst men: But the *New Birth* and *true Conversion* is a thing of a far higher Nature, consisting in a more special *Illumination of the Spirit*, to shew us our *lost estate by Nature*, and to reveal *Christ* to us as an Object of Faith; and it is such a work of the Spirit upon the Soul, as doth enable us to believe on the *Name of the Son of God*, to mourn for Sin, to hate Sin,

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Sin, and to walk in Obedience unto God, not meerly from Convictions of Conscience, and fear of the Wrath to come, but from a delight to do the Will of God, and a fixed Principle of Gospel ingenuity and gratitude to God, for the exceeding riches of his Grace and kindness towards us through Christ Jesus.

But for a further discovery of the depravedness and corruption of our Nature, whereby it may appear that there is such a need of a new Birth and Conversion, let us consider things more particularly.

1. As was touched before, There is wonderful ignorance in men about Heavenly things: It is an amazing thing if you enquire into people (yea those that are grown to be Men and Women, yea many that have gray hairs upon them) how ignorant they are about *Adams Fall*, Man's lost estate by *Nature*, the *Incarnation of Christ*, and redemption by him: And if so many be so grossly ignorant amongst us where they have the *Bible* in their own *Tongue*, and where they live under the *Preaching of the Word*, and such helps to get *Knowledge*; how ignorant and spiritually blind are we by *Nature*, and without the means of light!

2. There is a strange carelessness in man about

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about his future and Eternal State ; looking only at these seen things which are temporal ; That except a man be awakened and roused up by Afflictions, or Convictions of the Spirit, men are in a profound and deep sleep, and take no care what shall become of their Souls when they die and go hence : But live without studying of the Scriptures, without serious and constant praying to God, without speaking of Heavenly matters at all, as if they had not immortal Souls that must be happy or miserable for ever in another World. And if one tell them of Heaven and Hell, and that upon this moment depends Eternity, they think a man is Brain-sick and Fantastical.

3. *There is a proneness, yea, a strong bent and inclination in man to all evil, To Blaspheming of God, to Murder, to Theft, to Covetousness, to all kinds of Uncleaness, to Drunkenness, to Lying ; and though by education, company, employment, terrors of Conscience, fear of punishment from God or man, respect to name, and reputation in the World, and by the temper and constitution of the Body, this wicked bent of the heart may be much curbed and kept in ; yet there is in all by nature, such an evil frame and disposition, that there is no*
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sin so black, so horrible, so hainous, but man is prone to it.

4. There is in man, not only an *Indisposition* but *Opposition of the heart to any thing that good is*, not onely to Gospel Grace and Holiness to believe in Christ, to repent, and to walking in the Spirit, but even to Civility and Morality, and those things which yet natural men many times do. So that, I take that common change that is in men, from the grossest vices, to some sobriety, temperance and justice, to proceed not from the power of corrupt nature, but from a kind of common Grace, and common Illumination of the Spirit, which God distributeth to man as it pleases him, to make him useful to humane Society.

If there be any need to enlarge upon this Subject, to shew the Sinfulness and Corruption of man by Nature, (omitting many other ways of Sin) let us but seriously consider the Sins of the Eye, the Sins of the Tongue, and the Sins of the Thoughts.

1. *The Sins of the Eye* shew the wonderful corruption that is within the heart of man. Sin within in the heart sits looking out at those Windows of the eyes, ; and there when it seeth a suitable Object how it lusts after it : When we see beauty, then we have
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ton eyes, when we see fine houses and riches we have covetous eyes or envious eyes; when we view our own gifts and greatness, and converse with those that are below us, what scornful eyes and looks have we? The eye is a curious piece of Gods workmanship, all the Angels in Heaven could not make such a piece, 'tis the most beautifull member of the Body, and it is the light of the Body; it is endowed with a marvellous power to discern and take in Objects; the eye should be pure, holy, chaste: But it is full of Adultery, Covetousness, Pride and Envy. Even Holy *Job*, one in the State of Grace was fain to make a Covenant with his eyes, and put a Law and restraint upon them. It is strange what impressions are made upon the mind from the sight of the eye in a moment, how the eye affecteth the heart and stirreth up the corruptions of it: There may more corruption be stirred in the heart by one glance of the eye, than we can get rid of many days, it may be weeks: Even those that are in the state of Grace have need to watch the outward senses of the Body. The eye makes suddain and strong impressions on the mind. Ah! what need is there to look to Christ for a chaste eye, a mortified eye, a sanctified eye.

2. *The Sins of the Tongue* shew the wonderful Corruption that is within in the heart of man. *The Tongue is a fire, an unruly evil, full of deadly poyson, James 3. 6, 7, 8. Full of cursing and bitterness, Rom. 3. 14.* The Tongue and Speech is an excellent gift of God; 'tis mans glory above a Beast, that he can expresse his mind by Speech, but man maketh it his shame.

If all our passionate Speeches, proud and boasting Speeches, backbiting Speeches, obscene and filthy Speeches; lyes, curses, oaths, indiscreet, rash and idle words throughout our whole Lives should be written down, what a strange Book would it be?

So much Sin is committed by the Tongue and such an unruly evil it is, that *David*, a man in the state of Grace, and one that was eminent in Grace too, prays earnestly to God to *set a watch before his mouth, and to keep the door of his lips.*

3. *The Sins of the Thoughts* do shew the wonderfull corruption that is within in the heart of man: There is nothing that may sooner convince us of our own vileness, and make us cry out, *We are unclean, We are unclean*, than a serious reflection upon our Thoughts. O how many proud Thoughts, wanton Thoughts, envious Thoughts,

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Thoughts, uncharitable Thoughts, discontented Thoughts! What a multitude of sinful Thoughts arise in the heart in a little time, then what a numberless number is there in ones whole life that lives any considerable time in the World. *None but he that telleth the number of the Stars, and calleth them all by their names, is able to count the number of our vain and sinful thoughts, and he knoweth all the thoughts that come into our minds every one of them.*

As for good and holy Thoughts, if God did not put them in and keep them in the heart, how rarely should we have a thought of God, of Death, of Heaven, and the way that leadeth unto Eternal Blessedness.

The Thoughts of Foolishness is sin though it never come into outward act, there is Heart Adultery, Heart Theft, Heart Murder, Heart Disobedience to Parents, Heart Blasphemy against God, Heart Pride. He knoweth nothing almost of Religion, that knoweth not that Thoughts may be Sin as well as outward acts, and that abundance of sin may be committed in the heart that never appeareth in the Life. After Conversion nothing usually humbles men more than the sinfulness of the Thoughts and the unsuitableness

ableness of the heart to God; sinful thoughts were far more before God, wrought upon them: but as *Believers* grow more *spiritual* and *holy*, the more they take notice of their *Heart-sins*, and abhor themselves for them.

What should I more say, to set forth the corruption of our *Nature*, whole Volumes might be written of this *Subject*, and yet the half, no not the thousand part told us of it. But it is briefly comprehended in those words of our Saviour, *Mark* 7. 21, 22. *For from within out of the heart of men proceed evil thoughts, adultery, fornication, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness.* And in *Jeremiah* 17. 9. *The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, who can know it?*

To treat fully therefore of the corruption of *Man's Nature*, is one of the vastest *Subjects* that can be spoken of, next to that of the *Immensity* and *Infiniteness* of *God*, and his *Grace* in *Christ*; but these few things are written of it, that we might know the Plague of our own hearts, as an Introduction to the following Discourse, that we may see what need we have to believe on the *Name of the Son of God*, that we may be pardoned and sanctified through him.

By what hath been already said, we may see what a gross and dangerous mistake it is of those that think there is no other *Conversion* than being *Baptized*, and taking upon us the outward profession of *Christianity*. Now that any should speak thus, and count all trouble of Conscience about our *eternal estate*, and looking after a work of *Grace upon our Souls*, to be *Enthusiasm*, *Melancholly* and *Mopishness*, shews their wonderful ignorance of the *Scriptures*; and their utter unacquaintedness with the *Grace of God in their own Souls*.

When the holy Scripture speaks so much of a *new heart and spirit*; of the taking away of the heart of stone, and giving us an heart of flesh: of writing Gods Laws in the heart: of putting his fear into our hearts: of circumcising our hearts: and speaks of the necessity of being born again: of believing on Christ: of repentance and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord. To make all this to be onely our being baptized, and making an outward profession of Religion, shews men to be wholly strangers to the way that leadeth to *eternal life*.

And such men as they are utterly ignorant of the case and condition of *Souls*, that are in spiritual trouble and fear of the
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wrath to come, crying out, *What shall we do to be saved?* So they prescribe as strange remedies for their cure; as to be merry, to go into Company, to play at Cards, to go to Plays, and such like: when if they get rid of their trouble for sin by such means, and be not brought to Christ, who onely can give them rest; their remedy is worse than their disease, and they had better continue in their trouble of Spirit, than find ease by such things.

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S P I R I T.
C H A P II.

*That in the ordinary way of the Lord's
Converting of Souls, God doth first
work upon men in a more common
way, making a change upon, men
which yet fall short of a Saving
Work.*

THat there is a *Common work of the Spirit*
upon men, as well as a *Special and sa-*
ving work, appears by many Scriptures:
Those Hearers and Professors that are com-
pared to the *Stony ground*, and heard the
word with joy, Matth. 13. have common
motions and workings of the Spirit; and so
have such as are called the *foolish Virgins*,
that took their *Lamps* and went forth to meet
the

Common workings of the Spirit. 21

the Bridegroom. And the Apostle Peter shews, that some escape the *pollutions of the world* (in a sense) and yet return with the *Dog to his vomit*; are again intangled and quite overcome by their old sins, and their latter end is worse than their beginning. So likewise we read of those that have been enlightned and tasted of the *Heavenly gift*, and of the *Powers of the world to come*, and yet fall away.

Not that these Scriptures or any other, do hold forth a total and final Apostacy in any from *special grace*, but onely from *common grace*. The Doctrine of the certainty of the perseverance of all sound *Believers*, shines forth so gloriously from many plain Texts of Scripture, and from the Nature of the Covenant of Grace, and the purchase that Christ hath made for them that are his; and the Almightyness of God, who hath undertaken and promised to keep them, that they shall not depart from him and perish: that there is scarce any part of Religion that hath been controverted, that is with more facility defended against all Opposers.

But such Scriptures hold forth that there is *Common Grace*, as well as *Special*: Judas his profession and gifts: Simon Magus his be-
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22 *Common workings of the Spirit.*

believing when he saw the Miracles and Signs which were done: *Herod's* hearing *John Baptist* gladly, and doing many things: *Agrippa's* being almost perswaded to be a *Christian*: come all under this Head of *Common workings of the Spirit*; so called, because that not onely those that are *saved*, but those that *perish*, have many times such *workings of the Spirit*.

Now therefore observe, that amongst those that God is pleased to bestow *Common grace* upon, some are ordained to *eternal life*; and upon these the Lord sooner or later bestows *special grace*. And as for others, the holy Lord doth either by the common motions and influences of his Spirit, keep them in the profession and practice of it all their days; in his infinite wisdom and good pleasure making use of their common grace and gifts for the good of others, and for the preventing of their own greater damnation; or else God in his righteous judgment so ordereth it, that those common influences and workings of the Spirit depart from them, and so they openly fall away into gross error or profaneness of life to their greater damnation.

As to *Common Grace* and preparatory *workings of the Spirit*, some carry that point
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Common workings of the Spirit. 23

so far that they confound *common* and *special Grace*, darken the *Doctrine of Conversion*, and cast a stumbling block before weak Christians, puzzling them exceedingly, speaking of some things under that Head, that are wrought onely in those that are effectually called.

But these things following may be brought under this Head of *Common Grace*, and preparatory workings of the Spirit.

1. An *Illumination of the Spirit*, to make impression upon the Soul, that there is a God, that Man is fallen in *Adam*, that *Jesus Christ* is the *Mediatour*, that there is *Heaven* and *Hell*; yea one that hath onely this *common illumination*, may have knowledge, notional knowledge and utterance about these and other points of *Religion*, beyond many sincere Christians. Hence it is that men may go to Hell with their heads full of knowledge and notions of *Religion*: Some that we think for their knowledge and excellent parts, are happy men, yet may have onely *common illumination* and perish.

2. *Conviction of Sin* comes in also under this Head of *Common Grace*, and preparatory workings of the Spirit. The Lord useth before he infuseth *Faith in Christ*, and the habit of *special grace* into the heart, first to

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convince men of *Sin*. Those that were converted, in the Second Chapter of the *Acts*, were first *pricked in their hearts* with the sense of their *sins*, *verse 37*. afterwards God gave them *Faith in Christ*.

What *sins* the Lord will set home upon the Conscience, first of all to awaken and startle a *secure Sinner*, depends upon his *holy pleasure*.

Sometimes the Lord shews men so much of their own *vileness*, as doth almost sink them in their Spirits; sometimes the Lord dealeth with them in a gentler way: Usually God sets home *gross sins*, *special sins*, with most terrour upon the heart. It is no matter how long it is since the *sin* hath been committed; God can set it home upon the Conscience with as much terrour, as if it had been but yesterday.

The universal depravedness and corruption of our Nature is sometimes set home upon the Conscience, that the *convinced sinner* seeth himself more vile upon that account, than upon the account of his *sinful acts*.

It is said of the *Holy Ghost*, that he shall convince men of *sin*, because they believe not on *Christ*, John 16. 8, 9. From whence we must not conclude, that men are not so thoroughly convinced

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convinced of *sin*, as God doth convince men in the *preparatory workings of the Spirit*, except the Lord do set it home particularly upon the Conscience; that the person besides many other *sins*, is guilty of the *sin of unbelief*, taking it for the Soul's not coming to Christ, and believing and relying upon him as a *Saviour*: But we may take the *not believing on Christ* there in a large sense, for being in a course of *impenitency* and *gracelessness*: Or we may thus conceive the meaning of the place, that the *Holy Ghost* in *converting Souls* will *convince them of sin*, (what *sins* he pleaseth) and shew them that they are in danger of *Hell and damnation*, being such persons as are not yet in *Christ*, and believe not on his *Name*, and so have not their *pardon in Christ*, to plead for their *discharge* from the *guilt of their sins*.

It is true, where persons have been long under *convictions* of other *sins*, and have lived under much *preaching of Christ*, and yet have gone on a great while in a way of *seeking* to be *justified* by their *own righteousness*, and are not brought to give God the whole *glory of his free grace in Christ*, in *justifying* and *saving* of them, the Lord may set home this *unbelief* of theirs, and *slighting of Christ* their *only remedy*, as a great *sin* and
folly,

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folly, but that the Lord doth set home this particularly upon every one that is under conviction, in order to a *sound conversion*, and that conviction is not *through* and *sufficient* without this, cannot be made out by Scripture.

Under this Head it must be considered, That though the Lord useth to *convince men of sin*, and fright men with the *terroures of the Law*, whom he intends to *convert* and bring to Christ.

Yet first, all that are *converted* feel not the like *terroures* and *fears* of the *wrath to come*, before their *closing with Christ*.

2. Though the setting home of *sin upon the Conscience*, and putting the Soul in *fear of the wrath to come*, is the *work of the Spirit*, making use of the *terroures of the Law* to that purpose; yet not every thing that sometimes follows thereupon, as a mans concluding *that he shall never find mercy*; or his going on in a *legal way* to *seek peace*, and *healing of his wounds by his own righteousness and duties*, without the *blood of Christ*; these things come not from the *holy Spirit*, that first convinced the Soul of *sin*, but from *Satan*, and from the corruption of our own hearts, that mix themselves, and put in with these *convictions* and *workings of the Spirit*.

3. All

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3. All that are *convinced of sin*, and have *terroures*, yea it may be very great *terroures of Conscience* thereupon, are not converted. *Cain and Judas* had great *terroures of Conscience*, and yet never were converted: yet alas, many in giving account of their *conversion*, build too much upon this, that at such a time they were much troubled for their *sins*, when as trouble for *sin* is not a sufficient evidence of a *sound conversion*, if it be onely for fear of *Hell and damnation*: But if after sight of our *sins*, and fear of the *wrath of God*, we were brought to know *Christ*, to prize *Christ* above all, to rest our weary souls upon him, yea upon him alone, and were made *willing in the day of his power*, to take his *yoak* upon us, that as we live by him, we might also live to him: then the work, the good work of *special and saving grace* is begun in us, *Praises to Jehovah* for ever.

3. There is some stop put to *sin* especially *grosse sin*, by this common illumination and common convictions of the Spirit. So that a Man being awed with the terrors of the law, dare not run into that excessse of riot and prophanesse that he hath done, but having some feeling of the bitterness of *sin* cannot commit it with that greediness that he hath done.

But

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But begins to leave more open and gross sins, and perform duties of Religion and sets upon reforming of his Life; and finds some kinde of joy and peace therein, which yet we may not think comes from the *comforter* the Holy Ghost, for he giveth no joy and peace to any, but what flows from the beholding God's reconciled face in Christ, or a reflexion upon the effects of his grace and presence with us, leading us forth in wayes of holiness and obedience in his Name. So that wee must diligently consider that although these common workings of the Spirit, do lay some restraint upon Sin, and put us upon good duties and reformation of Life, yet wee must not rest here and say surely the bitterness of Death is past; but careful must we be as for our Lives, that now our Souls be rightly bottomed upon Christ, that he may be our righteousness, to justify us and the onely Fountaine of sanctification and holiness to us.

Many other things might be added under this head of common grace and preparatory workings of the spirit; as that the Lord doth sometimes make great impressions upon men of the holiness of the Law, of his justice if he should cast us into hell, of the insufficiency of our owne righteousness to
make

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make our peace with him and that we must come to Christ if we would have life.

But we must not extend the preparatory workings of the Spirit to far as some do, as if there were any saving work upon the soul, before union with Christ.

That which I aime at here, is to shew that in conversion ordinarily there is legal repentance before Evangelical, sight and sense of sin, before Christ be brought into the Soul, but no speciall grace and saving work untill union with Christ and infusion of a new heart and spirit: of these things this is the sum, The Lord doth usually work common grace, before he works speciall grace: Some have these common workings of the Spirit and yet are never savingly converted. In the elect these common workings of the Spirit are the preparing the way to speciall grace, that the Lord intends to bestow upon them, that is, that the common illumination, convictions and humbling for sin, that the holy Ghost worketh in the elect before their conversion, are in order to their conversion.

CHAP.

CH A P. III.

Shewing what Special Grace and Saving Conversion is.

NOW to shew what Special Grace and Saving Conversion is; First I shall give a short definition of it.

'Tis a work of the Spirit of God upon the soul, whereby the habit, the principle and seed of all grace is infused, changing and sanctifying the heart, to the bringing of us to trust wholly in Christ for salvation, to repent of our Sins, to love God and unfeignedly desire to walk before him in obedience and newness of Life according to his will.

Those who have this change wrought in them are passed from death to life, shall undoubtedly be saved and inherit everlasting Life.

But to open the doctrine of conversion more fully and plainly to every ones capacity, I know no better and surer way then to explain some of those expressions of the holy Scripture, by which special grace and conversion is set forth to us.

First,

First, special grace and conversion is frequently, (especially in the new Testament) called believing on Christ. To as many as received him, to them he gave power to become the Sons of God, even to as many as believed on his name. *John 1. 12. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting Life,* *John. 3. 36. This is the word of God that ye believe on him whom he hath sent,* *John. 6. 29. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved* *Act. 16. 31. With the heart Man believeth unto righteousness,* *Rom. 10. 10. By grace are ye saved through Faith.* *Ephes. 2. 8.* yea this grace of believing is spoken of in the Old Testament, though not so clearly as in the new.

Look to me and be saved, *Isa. 45. 22.* where by looking is meant believing and *vers. 24. surely shall one say in the Lord* (viz the Lord Jesus the Mediator) *have I righteousness and strength, even to him shall men come,* *24 vers.* where by coming is meant believing. Those that were saved under the Old Testament saw Christ's day of coming in the flesh afar off, and were glad and put their trust in him, having the same spirit of Faith in Christ, that the Saints have now.

Well then it is clear that where there is a true believing on Christ there is true conversion

version. Now therefore let us inquire when a man doth believe to the saving of his soul. And there is a necessity to enquire into the true nature of Saving Faith; because a Man may have some kind of Faith, and yet never go to Heaven? some are said for a while to believe, and afterwards to fall away *Luke. 8. 13.* *Simon Magus*, is said to believe, *Act. 8. 13.* Which Scripture do shew that there is an assent to the Doctrine of the Gospel, which is but a temporary Faith, an historical Faith from common illumination and convictions. Yea it is said, the Devils believe and tremble, *James. 2. 3.* The devils, by the power of light, and convictions are forced to believe that there is a God, though yet they are Enemies to him, and wish there were no God. The truth is, if a man do believe the Doctrine of Religion, so as that he maketh no question of the truth thereof, he doth well, and he ought to be thankful for this *common light* and *help of the spirit*, for all men have not this Faith of Assent to the truth of Christian Religion. Yea at some special seasons of temptation, a Child of God may be much troubled about some main points of the Gospel: but the God of all Grace will (after they have seen their own weakness a while, and

and been greatly humbled) established them and settle them again. But I say, that a meer Assent to the truth of Religion, is not enough to prove a man to be converted, for that may be without the true love and liking of Religion in the heart.

That believing in Christ which is peculiar to those that are saved, may be thus described : *It is a principle infused by the Spirit of God into the heart, whereby a poor sinner inlightned to see the truth of Christian Religion, and convinced of his lost and miserable estate by sin, and taken off from all hope and confidence in himself, doth trust and rely upon Jesus Christ, our great high Priest and Mediator, to be pardoned and accepted, and be made an Heir of Eternal life through him.*

The nature of this Grace may be further understood, by considering how it is set forth by various expressions in the Scripture.

1. 'Tis called *a trusting in Christ, or a hoping in Christ*, Ephes. 1. 12, 13. *That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ, : In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth.* Now this Expression holds forth thus much to us, That when a poor Sinner is convinced of his miserable estate by sin, if the Lord have a

gracious purpose to him, he will take him off from trusting in any thing in himself, to justify him in Gods sight, and reveal the Lord Jesus Christ to him, the onely Redeemer, and *mighty to save*, and so enable the poor Sinner to trust in him, and lay the whole weight and stress of his Soul upon him.

2. Believing in Christ, is called *a fleeing for refuge*, to lay hold upon the hope that is set before us in the Gospel, Heb. 6.18. When the Soul is said to *flee for refuge*, it is an illusion to the *City of refuge* under the Law, to which the Man-slayer was to flee from the *Avenger of blood*, and it is to shew, that when the Lord converts a Sinner, he maketh him see the danger he is in, he maketh him cry out, *O the Avenger of blood; O the wrath of God is fit to overtake me! How shall I escape? What shall I do?* The Lord fills a poor Sinner with fear and solicitousness about his condition, as the Man-slayer under the Law was, about the saving of his life from the *Avenger of blood*. If the Lord take delight in us to make us his people, he will convince us of sin, and make us see that the Curse of the Law is pursuing of us to take vengeance on us for our sins, and make us cry out for a *City of refuge*, and will shew

us that all other things are but *refuges of lies*, and that the Lord Jesus is the *only City of refuge*, and safety for a poor Sinner to flee unto, he is the *strong City*, the *salvation* that is in him will be as Walls and Bulwarks about a poor guilty Sinner for ever, that gets into him: Till Sinners be sensible of sin, and see in what an evil case and condition they are, the vengeance of *eternal fire* being ready to seize upon them, they regard not a *City of refuge*: what care they for *Jesus Christ*, let others look after him and take him that see their need of him, they apprehend no danger in their present condition; they see no need of an *Ark* for the *saving of their Souls*; they see no *deluge of wrath* coming, till it may be 'tis too late, and then they cry out *an Ark, an Ark, a Christ, a Christ*, when their *day of Grace* is past: They see no need of a *City of refuge*, they think they are safe and well enough, what should they fear? till it may be the time is past, and the *Gate of the City of refuge* shut against them: then, *O who shall bring us into the strong City? Who will bring us into the City of refuge? O a Christ, a Christ to save me, or else I am now, even now, sinking into the bottomless Pit.*

But as many as are *ordained to eternal life*,

shall believe on the Name of the Son of God, to them he shall be precious, they shall make him their strong City, their hiding place, their Tower of defence, and City of refuge.

There is another Expression in this place to set forth the work of believing, and the Nature of it, when the Apostle shews that the design of the Soul, in its coming to Christ, is to lay hold upon the hope that is set before us in him, namely, the hope of pardon, salvation, and eternal life. The Lord shews a poor Sinner, that as much as he hath broken the Law, yet there is One that came to seek and to save lost sinners, and that there is hope set before miserable sinners in the Gospel, and so Christ is called our hope, 1 Tim. 1. 1. the Object and Ground of Hope, He in whom there is hope for poor sinners. Now then the laying hold of this hope is believing on Christ: Many never knew what it was to fear and tremble, and see what a storm their sins had raised, that they were in danger to be cast away for ever; nor ever yet knew what it was to lay hold on the hope that is through Christ, to be as the Anchor for their Souls, both sure and stedfast, to hold them and keep them from eternal shipwracks.

By the way, if any shall say in these Expressions

pressions about *believing*, here is no mention of the Souls submitting to Christs Lordship, consenting to be ruled and governed by him, renouncing the dominion of *sin*.

I answer, that Frame of spirit, that Principle is wrought in all that do *truly believe*; but there is so much spoken in the Scripture of *Faith* under these notions of *trusting on Christ fleeing for refuge to him*, and *laying hold on the hope that is set before us in him*, for such reasons as these following.

1. Because although when a Soul is converted, he takes Christ as a Sanctifier as well as a Saviour, and is affected with the *filth of sin*, as well as the *guilt of sin*; yet the principal thing that the Soul is affected withall, the first is, *What shall I do to be saved?* As the Jaylor cried out, *Acts 16. 13.* This is not yet so fully his great question, *What shall I do to be sanctified?* But O how shall I be saved from Hell and eternal damnation, that I may not have the wrath of God abide upon me for ever; and so the poor sinner is directed to spy out that in Christ that answereth to this great difficulty to save it from wrath, and in the receiving and applying Christ as a Saviour and propitiation for our sins: the Soul is also secretly and powerfully wrought upon, to desire heartily to

be turned from *sin*, and to *live to Christ* for evermore.

2. Because although where true Faith is, there is a principle of new Obedience also, yet *Faith* as 'tis said to justify, doth onely apprehend and receive *Christ*, as our perfect righteousness and attonement with God, and is to be carefully distinguished from new Obedience, which in that respect is but the effect and concomitant thereof.

3. Because *this is a great, a very great work of the Spirit*, (greater then most think) to bring a poor convinced sinner to venture his soul, and eternall condition upon the Mediation and righteousness of *Jesus Christ*. Not but they that know him may well put their trust in him, who is able to save to the uttermost, all that come to God by him; but for a poor Sinner that seeth what a holy, and righteous Law he hath broken, what a great and holy God he hath offended, what great and sore punishment he hath deserved; and which is inflicted upon the generality of his fellow sinners to all eternity, when these things are realized to a Man, (as they are to those that are brought to *Christ*) and that he is also convinced that he hath no righteousness of his own, to make satisfaction to the justice of God: and to give unto God a ransom that

he should be delivered from going down to the pit. For this Man thus enlightned, awakened and convinced to put his trust in the righteousness of another, one whom he never saw, when he manifested himself in the flesh, and suffered for sin, the just for the unjust; for a poor sinner to reject all other confidences pitched on by the Sons of men, and to flee onely to this City of refuge, and his heart to trust safely there, is an eminent work of the Spirit : And so it will appeare when God shall be glorified in his Saints, and be admired in all them that do believe, not onely for giving such a sure object of Faith, as *Jesus Christ* is, but for drawing poor sinners to him. 'Tis an any easy thing for ignorant un-convinced sinners, to say they have Faith: and say they believe on Christ; but no Man can come to Christ and truly believe on his Name, except he heare and learn of the Father, and be drawn by an Almighty Power unto him.

4. Believing in Christ is called in the Scripture. *Our coming to Christ* : But I said unto you, *that ye also have seen me, and believe not all that the Father giveth me shall come to me,* Joh. 6. 36, 37. *If any man thirst let him come unto mee, and drink.* Joh. 3. 7. *Ye will not come unto me, that ye may have life,* Joh. 5. 40. By

this coming is not meant a local coming, but a spiritual unto Christ. He that truly cometh to Christ doth, come indeed from the power and filth of Sin, to put himself under the government and obedience of the Lord Jesus: but that which is principally held forth by this coming unto Christ, is the coming unto him as a Saviour from the guilt of sin, to be washed and made white in his blood, and be pardoned and justified through him.

5. Believing in Christ is called in the Scripture, *our receiving of Christ*, to as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the Sons of God, even to as many as believed on his Name, John. 1. 12. Now although every one that truly believeth, receiveth Christ in all his Offices, as a King to rule him, as a Priest to save him, and as a Prophet to teach him: yet when believing is set out by receiving Christ, it is meant especially of our *receiving* and *embracing* him as a Saviour, who is in a peculiar manner received into, and dwells in our hearts by faith, Ephes 3. 17. If any desire that I should speak a little more to open the *Nature of saving Faith*, and so to distinguish it from a common, notional and historical Faith, it may be done by shewing the *special properties* thereof.

1. 'Tis a knowing Faith, 'tis accompanied with so much *light* and *knowledge*, as is necessary to let Christ into the Soul, knowing that a man is not justified by the *works of the Law*, but by the *Faith of Jesus Christ*: We have believed on him, that we might be justified by the *Faith of him*, saith the Apostle, Galat. 2. 16. So that except there be some knowledge of the *greatness* and *holiness* of God with whom we have to do; some knowledge of our *Fall in Adam*, some knowledge of *Christ the Mediatour*, our estate cannot be good; for how shall we believe on him, of whom we have no knowledge? I speak not here of degrees of knowledge, as if every one that truly believeth in Christ, had a great measure thereof, but that there must be some competent knowledge.

This doth distinguish *true Faith* from that *ignorant Faith* that many have, who while they think they believe on Christ, know nothing of their *lost estate* by Nature, and of the *Person and Mediation* of the Son of God: for if men do not know Christ in some measure, neither do they believe on him.

But here let me be understood, not to speak of *Infants*, nor of *Ideots*, or *deaf and dumb persons* born so, whose Ignorance is invincible

vincible, as to any outward means to bring them to the knowledge of Christ, through their *natural incapacity* of receiving information by the *Scriptures* and *Ministry* of the *Word*, we are not to have such hard thoughts of their *condition*, as if none such could be saved, for doubtless some of them are *saved*, and even by the *blood of Christ*, as well as others, and have the *seed* and *habit of Faith* and *Repentance*, and the *habit of Spiritual knowledge* infused into them also by the *Holy Ghost*, though in a way altogether undiscernable to us. And what should hinder, or why should it be thought incredible, that *God who quickneth all things*, and infuses a *rational soul* into *Infants* in the *Womb*, and hath given a *rational soul* to *Ideots*, (however the actings of it are obstructed by some defects of the *Organs* of the *Body* :) I say what should hinder but that God can and doth, when it pleaseth him, infuse *spiritual life*, and the *habit of all grace* into *Infants* and *Ideots*.

But for persons that are growne up to years, and have the exercise of reason, it is the way of God, if he please to convert them, so to enlighten them as to exercise their thoughts about the matters of Salvation, and to give them a sight of their Sins and

and make known sensibly unto them, that Jesus Christ is the only way of help and salvation for them; So that though there may be knowledge without Faith, yet in grown persons and those that have the exercise of reason there cannot be Faith, without some competent measure of knowledge. Therefore such as are grossly ignorant, and scarce know from any inward illumination, whether there be a Christ or no, or whether they have any need of him to deliver them from the wrath to come, are not to flatter and deceive themselves in thinking they believe in Christ, because it is not the way of God to make a New Creation in persons grown up to years, and having the exercise of reason, but he saith *Let there be light.* Commanding Light to shine out of darkness, and shining into them to give them the knowledge of Jesus our Lord. I know there is great difference of mens parts, education and the means of knowledge that men have, but God hath none of his Children borne blind altogether, spiritually blind, and ignorant. Though men go blindfold to Hell; yet they do not go blindfold to Heaven, but the Lord shews them first how they are out of the way that leadeth unto

44 *Of believing on Christ.*

unto Life, and are in the broad way that leadeth to destruction and then revealeth Christ to them, as the way to Life, and that Faith in him, repentance and holiness do accompany Salvation. Therefore those that are grossly ignorant are certainly in a bad estate, though they are loath to see it, let them consider what the Scriptures say of them. This is a People of no understanding, therefore he that made them will not have mercy on them, and he that formed them will shew them no favour, *Isaiah. 27. 11. They do alwayes erre in their hearts they have not known my wayes,* Heb. 3. 10. Which shews that Men must needs erre in their hearts, and can never walk with God, when they do not know his wayes at all. *There is none that understandeth there is none that seeketh after God,* Rom. 3. 11. Until men come to have some understanding that they have lost the favour of God and his Image, and that there is a way in Christ to come unto God and be accepted with him, they will never seek after God, if haply they may find him, and so we see by Luke, 1. 70. That those that sit in darkness and total ignorance and blindness, they also sit

fit in the region and shadow of death; In the very Suburbs and gate of Hell.

2. 'Tis a penitent Faith, that is, true Faith is alwayes accompanied with true repentance; this distinguisheth it from that notional Faith that many have; they pretend to believe in Christ, but they never mourn for sin, they do not loath themselves for their iniquities. Some may talk of Free Grace, and of believing in Christ, but look upon sorrow for sin as a bondage-frame, and know not what it is to be vile in their own eyes, and abhor themselves for their evil ways and doings against the Lord: Where it is so there, is not true faith, their faith is but a fancy and a meer notion, who make sin a light matter, and have their hearts never rent and broken for it.

3. 'Tis an affectionate Faith, that is, true Faith is accompanied with Love to the person of Christ, in whom we do believe: Indeed that which first affecteth a poor convicted sinner towards Christ, is, that he is a Saviour and Deliverer from the guilt of sin: but in the looking towards him as a Saviour, the Soul falleth in love with him also, as he is God blessed for ever, and as he is filled with the Spirit of Grace in our Nature; so that union with him is every way desirable

ble to the Soul: to them that do believe Christ is precious, not onely for his Benefits, but for his Person; that when a poor Sinner looks to Christ with an eye of faith, he looks to Christ with an eye of love too, and it is in his heart to say, O Lord Jesus, to whom I come as a poor lost Sinner, to be washed from my sins with thy blood, I love thee, I prize thee, thou art excellent and glorious: Didst thou vouchsafe to be manifest in the flesh? Didst thou come to seek and save that which was lost? My heart cleaveth to thee in love: And O that I could love thee more, O thou excellent, most excellent Lord Jesus! O thou art fairer then all the children of men, fairer then all the Angels in Heaven! O a Saviour and such a Saviour, the brightness of the Fathers Glory, and the express Image of his Person! O thy Name is as an Oyntment poured forth! there is none like unto thee: I believe in thee and love thee too, thou art most sweet, thou art altozether lovely, O my dear Lord Jesus! I first cast mine eyes towards thee as a Redeemer and Saviour, being forced and necessitated to look out for a rest for my weary Soul, and being a little acquainted with thee, thou hast taken my heart with thy glorious person: O thou art the mighty God, one with the Father; O I behold something of thy glory, as
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of the onely begotten Son of God; thou art God manifest in the flesh: O'tis Immanuel, God with us! 'Tis the Lord of glory that was crucified for poor sinners! He is worthy to be praised, he is worthy to be beloved: Blessing, and glory, and honour to this great Mediatour: Praise him, O ye Sons of men! Praise him all the Angels that excell in strength: How little can I one poor creature do in praising and admiring of him. O help, help to praise him, help to admire him, help to love him; let every one have a Psalm of praise to him, utter your Songs aloud, aloud sing Hallelujahs to this King of glory.

But if any man doth not admire and love the Lord Jesus, neither doth he believe in him.

4. 'Tis an holy Faith, not onely in regard of the Object of it, the Lord Jesus Christ, the holy One, but in regard of the effects of it; true Faith is always accompanied with Holiness, in some comfortable measure with the principal desire and endeavour of Holiness.

Our Hearts are purified and sanctified by Faith, for he that doth rightly, looks to Christ as a Saviour, submits to him as a Sanctifier also; and it is in his heart to say, O Lord Jesus, thou art a blessed Mediatour indeed,

deed, thou art able not onely to save me from the guilt of my sins, but to deliver me from the power of my vile lusts: Come in thou blessed of the Lord, come into my heart, set up thy Throne there; cast down all my lusts to the ground, turn me from my iniquities, bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of thee, let me be partaker of a second benefit, not onely be justified by thee, but sanctified by thee. Come in thou blessed of the Lord, stand not without, welcome Christ as a Saviour, welcome Christ as a Sanctifier; thou art he whom my Soul delighteth in, come into thy Temple, drive out all my lusts even all of them, as thou once didst the Buyers and Sellers out of the Temple; shew the power of thy grace, O mighty one, go forth conquering and to conquer, subdue mine iniquities, strong is thy arm, strong is thy right hand: let me see my desire upon thine enemies, and my enemies, these vile lusts of my heart, smite them to the ground, that they may not rise a second time until this be perfectly done, and my heart be brought to perfect obedience to thee, I shall sigh and never be at rest.

Thus we may distinguish true Faith, from counterfeit Faith that many have, who while they pretend to believe on Christ as a Saviour, have no intention
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and desire to be sanctified and walk holily but rather are more emboldened to sin by seeming to lean upon Christ for salvation.

5. 'Tis an abiding Faith, true Faith in Christ is a fixed and permanent thing. One that hath but common workings of the Spirit, may for a fit in great terrors of conscience, or at the hearing of a Sermon of Christ, seem to believe in Christ, & prize Christ above all; but when the trouble of Conscience, is worne of and those Common workings of the Spirit fayle, Christ is despised and made nothing of.

Though a Believer is not alwaies acting Faith on Christ yet he hath alwaies the habit of Faith, such a Frame and bent upon his heart that though he is not at the present under terrors of Conscience, and though his heart and Life be more reformed then it hath been, yet still he lives upon Christ as Jehovah his righteousness, not only at the first looking to Christ but evermore desiring to be found in him; whereas others grow wanton against Christ when they get out of terrors of Conscience, and think they can do well enough, with their own righteousness without his. If a man hath found
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that through the Grace of God his heart hath been carried out in a constant way, from time to time, since the Lord first wrought upon him, still to be humbled for sin and to prize Christ, and to live wholly upon his righteousness, it is a signe of true Faith in Christ.

By such things as these we may examine our selves whether we have Faith or no and prove our selves whether Christ be in us or not.

Secondly, special grace and conversion is frequently called repentance. Repentance from dead works Heb. 6. 1. Repentance, to salvation 2 Cor. 7. 10. God commandeth men every where to repent Aët. 17. 30. Repent and be converted that your sins may be blotted out, Aët. 3. 19. Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto Life, Aët. 11. 18. Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a prince and a Saviour, to give repentance unto Israel and forgiveness of Sins.

Therefore if the Lord hath given a man repentance he is in a state of grace, and his sins are forgiven him.

But there is a Legal repentance so called; 1. Because it is wrought only by the

the terrors of the Law and fear of damnation, 2. Because the person that repenteth onely in that way and manner as to his state and condition, is yet under the *Law* and the curses of it, and not under *Grace*. Now this is not that which the Scripture calleth *repentance unto Life*, and *repentance unto Salvation* but may be in those that never shall be saved. The *Holy Ghost* saith, that *Judas* repented himself saying, *I have betrayed the innocent blood*, Matth. 27. 3, 4. And *Ahab* when he heard of Gods Judgments against him, rent his clothes, put sackcloth upon his flesh and fasted and humbled himself, 1 Kings. 21. 27. 29. yet we find not in the Scripture that he was converted, but the contrary. Men are in nothing more deceived then about *Repentance*, deferring it to old age, when they have had their fill of *Sin* as if they were sure of their lives, as long as they please to count their time in the world, and as if they could repent at any time when it shall please them to think best; and so likewise many are deceived about their having *Repentance* already, taking every sigh in a good mood and trouble for their sins, to be sufficient *Repentance*; whereas there is a *repentance for sin*, that ariseth

onely from fear of Hell, shame in the world, and apprehensions of outward inconveniences and dangers that men have exposed themselves to by their *vile courses*. What Thief or Murderer except he be extraordinarily stupid and hardened, doth not in such a common way bewail his *sins*, and yet it may be no signes of *true conversion* do appear, and the person wholly ignorant of *Christ* and the way of *salvation* by him.

Therefore it is necessary to distinguish between *common* and *legal repentance*, and that *repentance* which is to *salvation*, which may be done by these particulars.

1. *True repentance* is alwaies accompanied with *Faith in Christ*, so that he that doth not truly believe in *Christ*, neither doth he truly repent. Many persons think if they be but sorry for their *Sins*, that this is enough, and that this will make satisfaction for their *sins*, and never know what it is to believe in *Christ* and to be washed in his blood from the guilt of their *sins*. This therefore must be considered, that as when the Scripture saith; believe on the Lord *Jesus* and thou shalt be saved, it is to be understood of such a *Faith* as is accompanied with *repentance* and sorrow for *sin*: So when the Lord commandeth us to *repent*, it is to be understood of such a
repentance

repentance as is accompanied with *believing in Christ*, without which all our sorrow for sin, and abstaining from some outward act of it signifies nothing. And this is observable that ignorant people make a *Christ* of their *repentance*, for they rest in this, that they are sorry for their sins (though the Lord knows the generality of them scarce know what *trouble of Conscience for sin* is) and never look after Christ as a Saviour to *know him* and *believe on his name*, So that their pretended *repentance* and *trouble for their sins*, doth but keep them at a distance from Christ, and maketh them that they hunger and thirst not after him.

But where a poor sinner looks to Christ with an *eye of Faith* and *reliance on him*, and looks upon his sins with an *eye of Sorrow* and grief for them, that is the true *Penitent*. Many are so blinded by the God of this world, and the *Gospel* (*the way of Salvation by Christ*) is so hid from them, that all that they look at is, that when they sin, if they be but sorry for it, and purpose to amend they think that all is well, and that God is pacified for all that they have done against him, and are strangers all their dayes to believing in Christ and being accepted in him.

2. *True repentance is a sorrowing for sin, as it is an offending and displeasing God; and not mearly for the hurt and mischief that Sin hath brought or may bring upon our lives. Indeed as we are often said in the Scripture, to sin against God; so we are said to be Sinners against our own souls, Num. 16. 38. As sin is an offence it is committed against God, but the hurt and mischief of it is to our own souls, and upon both these accounts, we are to repent of it: but it is not godly sorrow that we have for our sins, except we have a respect to God grieving that we have violated his Laws and so offended his Blessed Majesty, as well as that we have wronged our own Souls, and destroyed our selves without he prevent it by shewing us mercy in Christ. So that it is in the heart of a true Penitent to sigh out such lamentations as these; O most glorious God against thee, against thee have I sinned, against thee my Creator, from whom I have my being, against thee the pure and holy Majesty, holy, holy, holy, against thee, who art the Lord God, gracious, long suffering, and abundant in mercy, O thou infinite goodness, O thou Father of mercies, against thee*

thee have I sinned, I have transgressed, I have rebelled, and I, whither shall I cause my shame to go, I cannot put it away from mee, for to mee belongeth shame and confusion of Face, because I have sinned against thee, I cannot stand before thee, because of my sins, but through the blood of Jesus. Lord I cannot abase my self enough before thee, nor be vile enough in my own eyes. I see a little of thee, what a blessed and glorious Majesty thou art whom I have offended, and I see a little of my self, that behold I am vile, wherefore I abhor my self in dust and ashes: O that thou would'st make my head as waters and mine eyes as a Fountain of tears to weep day and night for my sins: O that thou wouldst smite and speak to this Rock of my heart, that the waters of godly sorrow might gush out: O that thy Spirit might work more upon me this way to give me a more broken and contrite Spirit for sin, I do not desire thou shouldst speak any more to my Soul from Mount Sinai with those Thunderings and Lightenings, and that terrible voice out of the fire and darkness and tempests presenting thy wrath to mee for the breach of thy holy Law but now thou hast brought my poor weary fainting

ring soul to Jesus the Mediator and to the blood of sprinkling, speak to me from the mercy seat, speak comfortably to me, melt and soften my heart, with the sight of thy grace in Christ, and let my soul be filled with that Sorrow for Sin that is accompanied with the sense of pardon in Christ, which sorrow is most genuine, filial, free, and acceptable unto thee.

3. True repentance is accompanied with the hatred of sin. David a true penitent hated every false way, Psal. 119. 128. Paul in his Lamentations for the remainders of corruption in him saith; that which I hate, That do I, Rom. 7. 15. a true Penitent not onely mournes for sin committed but hates it, abhors it from his New Nature; he hath an everlasting Antipathy against Sin, that if the Principle of grace in him was not hindred in its actings by Sin that dwelleth in him, a true Penitent would shew himself another manner of person then he doth: we must not think that after true repentance a man sinneth no more for there is no man that liveth here below and Sinnereth not; neither must wee think that such a one may not possibly fall into the same Sin againe. Indeed for gross Sins, ordinarily

dinarily God keeps his people from them, from the time of their *first conversion* and if he leave them to fall into them at any time ; as he did *Noah, David* and *Peter* after particular repentance for them, and recovery out of them, it is a rare and unusual thing for them to fall into them again , but as for *vain thoughts, distractions in holy duties and passions*, and such Sins as do suddenly Surprise and overtake us as at unawares, no doubt after *true repentance* a godly Man may fall into them again and again, to the great grief of his Soul ; yea after much repentance particularly for those things and many *Prayers and supplications* to God for power and strength against them so that not once or twice, but often and every day the best *Saints* have need with *Paul* to cry out, *O wretched Man that I am who shall deliver me from this body of death.*

Notwithstanding all this remainder of corruption that the best *Saints* upon earth will confess, there is yet in them as *Paul* himself complained (though ignorant and proud *Pharisees* that know not themselves, and the plague of their owne hearts think themselves to be perfect) yet I say
this

this truth abideth firme, that a *true penitent* hateth *Sin*, it is besides his intention, it is against the general purpose of his heart, it is contrary to his new nature and 'tis the grief of his Soul when he *Sinneth against God*; he so hateth sin, that he will never be at peace with it but opposeth it and looks to Heaven it self for aid against the enemy.

4. *True repentance is an abiding thing upon the heart*, not that a *true Penitent* is always acting the *grace of Repentance*; but though it may cease sometimes in the *act*, yet it never ceases in the *habit*: that is, there is always in such, an *habitual frame* upon the heart to lie low before God, and walk humbly with him.

A *natural man* may sometimes in great afflictions, and in terrours of Conscience mourn for sin, but 'tis a forced thing, he would get it off from his spirit, and it leaves not an *habitual humiliation* upon him, but that *filial, evangelical sorrow* that a *Believer* hath for sin, is a *frame of spirit* that he likes and loves, and cherisheth, and would have more of, for (which is a great mystery to a natural man) that kind of sorrow for sin that a man in the state of grace hath, may be accompanied with the greatest sense and afflu-

assurance of pardon in Christ, and so be a very sweet and pleasing, and desirable frame of spirit. At the same time a poor soul may rejoyce in Gods pardoning grace in Christ, and mourn for sin too; and a poor broken-hearted Believer finds this sorrow to be better and sweeter then all the laughter and merriment of the men of the World.

3. *Special Grace and Conversion is frequently called in the Scripture, the Fear of God.* Job's character is, *that he was a man that feared God*, Job 1. 1. Obadiah's, *That he feared the Lord greatly*, 1 Kings 18. 3. Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter, *Fear God and keep his Commandments, for this is the whole duty of man*, Eccles. 12. 13. *Praise our God all ye his servants, and ye that fear him*, Rev. 19. 5. *The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear him*, Psalm. 147. 11. And it is one great promise of God in the New Covenant, *to put his fear into our hearts*, Jerem. 32. 40. So that where there is a right fear of God, there is true conversion.

But because there is a common awe of a Deity in most men, a certain slavish, servile, fear of God, fearing him, only as a Malefactor feareth the Judge, not as a dutiful
Son

Son feareth a good Father, and that upon judgments that God sends, some are said, *to fear the Lord*, 2 Kings 17. 32, 33. that is, *with a slavish fear*, yet v. 34. 'tis said of the same persons, *They fear not the Lord, nor do after his Statutes*; that is, they had not a gracious and obedient fear of God: And likewise because the very Devils are said *to tremble*, Jam. 2. 19. that is, they even shake with fear of the *wrath of God*; therefore it is necessary to distinguish between that slavish fear of God that is in the very wicked of the World, and in the Devils themselves, and that right gracious fear of God that is in those that are truly *converted*, which may be done in these following particulars:

1. *A right fear of God is accompanied with hope in his free mercy in Christ.* The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy, *Psalms*. 147. 11. Some they pretend to hope in Gods mercy in Christ, but they do not fear God, their hearts are not awed with his Majesty, nor afraid to offend him: such a hope is not right; on the other hand, some pretend to fear God, and fear sinning against him, but they hope not in his mercy, but in their own merits; they go on under a *Covenant of works*, cast not their Souls upon Christ
will

will not lay their hold upon the hope that is set before them in the Gospel. These men have not a right fear of God : He that is so moved with fear of the Majesty and Wrath of God, that he gets into Christ, the Ark that God hath prepared for the saving of Souls, and placeth all his hope for his eternal safety in Christ the Son of God ; this is the man that feareth the Lord aright. But if men fear God only as a Judge and Avenger of Sin, and look upon him as a hard Master, and so are afraid of him, and their hearts secretly rise against him, but they never look towards his Mercy-seat, that they may set their hope in his grace in Christ, such have not a right fear of God, neither a right reverential, nor a right filial fear of God, but onely a slavish and servile.

2. *A right fear of God is accompanied with eschewing evil.* Job is said to be a man fearing God and eschewing evil, Job. 1.

1. *The transgression of the wicked saith within my heart, that there is no fear of God before his eyes,* Psalm, 36. 1. The gross and horrible profaneness of some wicked men proclaims to every one, that they are so far from having a right fear of God, such as he puts in-
to

to the hearts of his people, that they have no fear of God, no common awe of a Deity at all in their ordinary course, for they live as if there were no God that regarded the ways of the Sons of men, and would bring them into judgment: But where there is a right fear of God, there is not a bare eschewing evil, but an eschewing evil from an inward principle of the fear and love of God in the heart, and delight in his Commandments.

Now when eschewing evil is made a sign of the true fear of God in the heart, it must not be so understood, as if *Job* of whom that character is given in the place above-mentioned or any other (who yet truly fear God) can so totally eschew evil in this life, as to be wholly free from sin; for we see by the holy Story, that *Job* himself of whom this is spoken, had his passions and sinful failings, for which he confessed to God he was *vile, and abhorred himself in dust and ashes*; but when such are said to eschew evil, the meaning is, that they do so in a comfortable measure, and in the sincere and earnest desire and endeavour of their Souls.

3. *A right fear of God is not an involuntary passion and fear which torments the mind, but is a pleasing and delightful thing to the Soul.*

Soul. Fear hath torment, 1 John 4. 18. Slavish, sinful and irregular fear hath so; but a right reverential fear of God is delightful to the Soul, it hath no torment in it to the mind. The Angels in Heaven, and the Saints in all their glory have an high degree of this reverential fear of God. And so they find here in this World, that they never have sweeter duties, then when their hearts are most filled with a reverential fear of God, and so in their whole conversation they find that the more they walk in the fear of the Lord, the more they walk in the comfort of the Holy Ghost.

Indeed in such extraordinary appearances of God by outward signs of the Glory of his Majesty, as were to *Abraham*, Gen. 15. 12. 17. to *Moses* when the Lord appeared in the *flame of fire out of the midst of the bush*, Exod. 3. 2. & 6. to *Elijah*, 1 Kings 19. 13. and to *Isaiah*, Chap. 6. 5. the best Saint in this mortal state may be over-set and faint, and be troubled at the Lords presence; for 'tis said, that when God so appeared to *Abraham*, an horreur of great darkness fell upon him: 'tis said of *Moses*, he hid his face, and was afraid to look upon God, and at another time when God spake out of the fire upon Mount Sinai, *Moses* said

said, *I exceedingly fear and tremble.* Elijah hid his face in his Mantle: and Isaiah cries out, *Wo is me, I am undone, for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.* But it is to be considered, that it was not meerly the apprehension of the greatness and glory of the Majesty of God, and the reverence of God thereupon, that caused this trouble to their spirits, but these extraordinary signs of Gods presence, which their bodies and spirits in this frail and mortal state could not bear. That nevertheless it stands good what hath been laid down, that a reverential fear of God is a most pleasing and delightful thing to the Soul of a Christian, yea it helps much to compose the body and natural spirits in the service of God, and walking with him.

In a word, to distinguish a right feare of God from a slavish or hipocriticall feare, it is of that nature, that the more we feare him, the more we hope in his mercy, the more we feare him, the more obedient we are to him; the more we fear him, the more we would fear him, and desire to feare his Name, and the more we fear him, the more we love him: he that findeth in any measure such a feare of God put into his heart as is here described, is converted and in the state of grace.

4. *Speciall grace and conversion is held forth in the Scripture by love to God, 1 Cor. 8. 3. If any man love God, the same is known of him, Ephes. 6. 24. Grace be with all them that love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. John. 21. 17. Simon Son of Jonas lovest thou me? and Peter said, Lord thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee. Men may have notional knowledge, parts and gifts, and this may but puffed them up with pride and do their souls no good; but if a man so know God as to love him and delight in him, that is the man that is known of God, owned and approved of him.*

Quest. what are the signes of love to God.

Ans. 1 High and raised thoughts of God fixed and settled in the heart, are a signe of love to God; an habituall frame of heart to look upon God as most excellent and glorious, and to adore him as well for his holiness and infinite purity, as for the exceeding riches of his grace in Christ.

It is true, a Saints love to God is not come to perfection in this life, it is not come to its height by a Thousand degrees, yet there is such an impression of love to God upon the heart of a Believer and a-

mongst other things, for his wonderful dispensation of grace in Christ, that he thinks (and well he may) that he can never love and prayse the holy Lord as he should do. And sometimes it may be his heart waxes hot, and this fire of love to God burneth and flameth in him, and he can cry out to this effect, Oh, O Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth, and thy glory is above the heavens; Look, Look, O my soul, upon this great King, the King of glory, the King eternal and immortal, and admire him and love him for ever. O thou infinite goodness, O thou Fountain of Life, wilt thou vouchsafe to be loved of me? O thy condiscention, thy condiscention, that thou wilt not account it presumption for me to love thee, such a poor worm as I am & so vile and sinful! O blessed Lord, if I may love thee, then O my base unworthiness that I love thee no more! O love, love flame out, flame out, here is thy right object, this is he that is to be loved with all my heart, with all my Soul, with all my might and with all my strength; here is infinite power, here is infinite wisdom, here is infinite holiness, here is infinite mercy; more love, more, more love for the holy and blessed lord: what shall I love him no more, O my soul, are thy faculties enlarged to love as far as a poor finite creature is capable to love?

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O my soul, love as Jehovah is to be loved, love suitably to the Object thou art now set upon, love not as if thou wert loving a creature, love not at such a poor and low rate, but love as one that is loving an infinite and glorious God; love as one that is loving him that is love itself, and hath manifested it in sending his only begotten Son into the world to save sinners. O what manner of love was this, and O with what manner of love should this blessed God be loved? O Lord thou art above all love, above all praise! O that ever I have loved any thing else besides thee, when there was thy self to love! O that ever I should love such a vile thing as sin, and such a poor trifle as the world is! Lord now set my love right, put my heart into the highest pitch of love to thee that poor clay is capable of, and there hold me to eternity.

Thus possibly a poor Believer may sometimes finde his heart raysted to God in love and delight in him; however there is a rooted, grounded, settled affection in the soul of a Believer to God, so that he doth not only see reason why he should love God, but it is his desire to love him and delight in him above all things, though the actings of this love may be much kept down by manifold temptations and by the opposition of the flesh, as the actings of other graces in us are also.

2. *Hating of sin because God hates it, because it is displeasing to him, is a signe of love to God, yet that love the Lord hate evil, Psal. 97. 10. it is not onely their duty to do so, but in some measure it is so with every Child of God.*

Though after conversion sin doth yet remain, it is hated and abhorred so, that it is in the heart to say, O Sin what dost thou here? thou art not onely my greatest enemy, but thou art an enemy to that holy and blessed God whom my soul loveth. O when shall I be rid of thee? time was when thou and I were all one, we were wedded together, but now I see it was an unlawful marriage, I was to be for the Lord and not for another, therefore I will love thee no more: O if it be so that thou wilt not leave me, till death us do part, I wait for that good hour when the Lord will take me to himself, that so I may be freed from thee wholly and for ever, and be with my heavenly Head and husband.

3. *Love to the Saints is a sign of love to God, he that saith, he loveth God and hateth his Brother is a liar; he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen how can he love God, whom he hath not seen? 1 John 4. 20. He that loveth not the Image of God in grace and holiness, which he seeth in his people how*

can he love God, whom in his glorious essence he hath not seen. An universal love to all in whom we see the grace of Christ, is a certain sign of our love to God: so that one that truly loves God, can in some measure appeal to God, to this effect; O Lord, however I have hated thy people in time past, and my heart hath secretly risen against them, for the good that was in them, yet since thou hast been pleased to turn me from darkness to light, I make an high account of thy people, I look upon them as the excellent on the earth; I am troubled that I love them no more, and that I can do no more for them; I love them not meerly because they are of my judgment in some lesser points, but I love them because they fear and love thee, because they repent of their sinning against thee, and believe on thy Son, and desire to walk so as to please thee, so far as thou art pleased to give them the knowledge of thy will: My heart is knit to them, whose hearts are knit to Christ, who cleave in their hearts to that one Mediatour, that one Offering, that one Sacrifice for sins for ever, so far as they manifest this, they are dear to me, they must needs be precious to me, to whom Christ is precious. And though because of some errors and mistakes that in my poor thoughts I may judge some of them to be in, I cannot comfortably

70 Of love to the Saints.

ably joyn with such in some things; yet O Lord, thou that knowest all things, knowest that I love them, and though through passion and ignorance, and misguided zeal, I may carry it unscemly sometimes to some of thy servants, and have a hand in their troubles and sufferings, (as it is possible for the Saints in some sort to persecute one another in this imperfect state) yet O Lord, thou knowest that my heart is not set against any of them, for that which I judge to be good in them, but do love and honour them for it. And though my love is most exercised and drawn out to those Saints whom I am most acquainted with, and to whom I am nearest joyned in the fellowship of the Gospel, there being more occasion and opportunity for the drawing out of my love to them; yet thou knowest there is love in my heart to all Saints, and there is not that man living that makes profession of thy Name, though differing from me in opinion, and violent against me, of whom I should not rejoyce to have thoughts of meeting him in Heaven.

But if men be Despisers of those that are good, hate them, and speak evil of them falsely for Christs sake, though they may flatter themselves, and think they love God, yet they do not. They that scoff at the
 Godly,

Godly, and their hearts rise against them for their grace and holiness, though they will say they love God, or else it were pity they should live, they are utterly deceived, for indeed they are Haters of God and Goodness. Many other signs of love to God might here be mentioned, as grieving when God is dishonoured, longing for the coming of his Kingdom, that his Name, and Truth, and Glory may be more manifested in the World, and desiring to bring all that we can to love him and obey him.

Likewise many other expressions by which Conversion is set forth in the Scripture, might be opened, but these things that have been spoken, may suffice to shew wherein Conversion lieth, if God give men hearts to examine their spiritual estate, which shall read these things.

CHAP. IV.

Of the Outward Means that God is pleased to make use of in the conversion of Souls.

THat God doth make use of outward means in the bringing of Souls home to himself, is evident both from Scripture and Experience, which is not because God cannot do the work without Outward Means (for in Elect Infants, and sometimes in others, God worketh Grace without them) but it is meerly from the pleasure of his will, what way he will take to convert a soul, and whatsoever the outward means be, the inward, spiritual and effectual means of Conversion is, the Almighty Power of God, as I intend to set forth in the next Chapter.

But to give some account of this matter, concerning the outward means that the Lord makes use of for the conversion of Souls.

1. Sometimes the Lord hath made use of great and sore afflictions to awaken men, convince them of their sins, and so to bring them

to Christ: And if they be bound in Fetters, and be holden in Cords of affliction, then he sheweth them their work and their transgressions that they have exceeded, he openeth their ear to Discipline, Job 36. 8, 9, Job 33. 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24. As one who being sick and restless some nights, it pleased God to put in with the affliction, and set this upon his heart, that if it were so grievous to him to pass away a few Nights, though he was in his own House, and amongst his dear Relations, because he had pain and sickness upon his body, how miserable should he be if he should bear the torments of Hell for ever; and so the Lord brought him to look after an interest in Christ, that he might be *delivered from the wrath to come*. The Lord sometimes makes use of shame in the World, poverty, imprisonment, yea the sentence of death, to be the means of bringing men to a sight of their sins, and to look after Christ.

2. Sometimes the holy and convincing lives of the Saints, have been blessed of God, to put ignorant and wicked men upon enquiring after Religion, saying within themselves, Surely there is an excellency in the ways of God,; surely in those ways must I find blessedness and peace, and not in these ways

ways of debauchery and profaneness: And so the Lord lets in light into their souls; and the Apostle Peter exhorts godly Wives to carry themselves with that holiness and circumspection, that their carnal husbands who it maybe are so obstinate and profane, that they will scarce hear the faithful preaching of the word, may without that means be won by their heavenly conversation, 1 Pet. 3. 1.

3. We read of many that in the Primitive times when such great multitudes laid down their lives for the Name of the Lord Jesus, by beholding their patience and joyfulness in their sufferings, were convinced of the truth and excellency of Christian Religion, and were converted unto God.

4. Some observing how earnestly godly Ministers or others have wrestled with God in Prayer for their conversion, have been awakened by it, and God hath put it into their hearts, to think with themselves, that if the salvation of their Souls be so much set by in the eyes of others, how much more should the salvation of their Souls be regarded by themselves; and upon such thoughts the Lord hath begun the good work in them.

5. The hearing of the great horreur of Conscience, that others are in for sin, and talking

king with them about the cause of their trouble, hath been blessed of God to the conversion of some. This hath convinced some that were almost *Atheists*, that there is a God and that it is a fearful thing to lie under the sense of his wrath; this hath put them upon looking into their owne estate, and so brought them to Christ, and so they have found that it was better to heare the shrieks, and cryes, and groans of those that were heavy laden with the sense of their sins, then to hear the jollity, merriment and songs of fools, and spiritual Mad-Men who go laughing to Hell.

6. *The Instructions of Parents and Masters*, have been oftentimes blessed of God, to the conversion of their Children and servants: Godly Parents as their Children grow up, should desire to be instruments of bringing their Children to Heaven, as well as they were instruments to bring them into this World. And some Children bless God that they had praying Fathers, and praying Mothers, and such as taught them the fear of the Lord. Some servants bless God that ever they came to live in *Praying Families*, and where they were instructed in the wayes of God.

God sometimes brings to remembrance the
instruct-

Instructions of Parents and Masters, to do their Children and servants good, when they are at rest in the dust; even those instructions, which when they were first given, took no impression upon them. That the good seed which they had sowne, and could not see any effect of, the Lord watereth it by his Spirit; when they are dead and gone, then to their Children remember the words which were spoken unto them, and they come with new life and Power upon their hearts.

To these many more might be added, but let me come to speak of that which is the most ordinary way of conversion.

7. The word preached is the most ordinary means of conversion; the reading of the word our selves, or hearing it read by others, and likewise the reading of other good Books, have been blessed of God to the conversion of Souls, and all these things are to be used: But the opening, urging, and applying the doctrine of the word unto people in a way of preaching is the ordinary means of Conversion *Acts. 2. 37. 41. Acts. 11. 21. 22. Acts. 26. 16, 17, 18. Rom. 1. 16. Mat. 28. 19. Go teach all nations. 2. Tim. 4. 1. 2. Preach the word, be instant in season and out of season, Rom. 10. How shall they believe on him of whom they have not heard, and how shall they*

they hear without a preacher. And so it appeareth throughout the story of the *Acts* of the Apostles, that the declaring of the Gospel by lively voice was the great means that God made use of for the Conversion of Souls.

And here it is to be noted, That those who are converted out of this ordinary way, whatsoever outward means the Lord pleases to take occasion by, for their conversion; yet he doth, (though more immediately by his Spirit,) set home the same things (for the substance) upon their hearts that are held forth to others, who are converted by the Ministry of the word, that is, the Lord shewes them their sinful and miserable estate, and reveals Christ to them, as the only way of justification and acceptance with him.

Now then seeing God is Pleased to make so much use of the preaching of the word for the conversion of Souls; let all the true ministers of Christ go forth in his name, and strength, let them look to him for assistance and success in the work, and as ever they would be Instrumental for the conversion of Souls, let them preach with all plainness of Speech, let them not be desirous of vain glory; let them Preach without all ostentation, without all dark and affected expressions, and let them in their
Preaching

Preaching insist much upon common and fundamental truths, as about the greatness and holiness of God, the sinfulness and misery of Man; The necessity of conversion and the way of redemption by the blood of Jesus. Such subjects as these are so vast, and also so necessary that they may take up much of a Ministers Preaching: It is a great fault in ministers if they do not with all their might, set forth unto men their miserable estate by nature, and if they do not endeavour to bring their hearers acquainted with Christ? holding forth him upon all occasions to them, not only as he by whom we must be delivered from the wrath to come, but as the fountain and Spring of all grace, and Spiritual strength, whereby we may walk in holiness, and new obedience.

For Ministers to put men upon forsaking their evil wayes and so promising them Life without directing them to Christ, to put their whole trust in him, for their justification; and to fetch strength and vertue from him, for the mortification of Sin and for new obedience, is but to teach men to build upon the Sands, and to shew them a cleaner way to Hell.

For Ministers to preach so much at random, not having well digested themselves the doctrine of original Sin, the difference, between

between the Law and the Gospel, the necessity and nature of conversion, the doctrine of justification by the righteousness of Christ imputed to them that believe, and the nature of Gospel grace and true sanctification, tends to the making of their Preaching useless to the salvation of mens Souls : And though such Preachers may have applause from the ignorant for their *Method*, delivery and learning, yet they do but mislead men and trifle with them about a thing of the highest moment, the salvation of their Souls.

As a Physician must not play with the life of a man, 'Tis such a precious thing, but had need to be well advised in his Judgment of the nature of the disease and of a right Method for cure, and haue many things in his eye ; so had a Minister need to be careful much more, in dealing with such a thing as the Soul of a man is, to know the original cause of Soul Maladies, and the only way of cure, which is by the blood of Jesus. But if Preachers do but play with their Texts, and play with the Souls of their hearers, not having their hearts awed with a holy reverence of God and his Word, and affectionately desirous of the eternal salvation of the People, great is their Sin.

What

What with the differences amongst us about lesser things, and invectives that Preachers stuff their Sermons with, against those that dissent from them; what with errors of Doctrine, that some Preachers seem to be tainted with; what with the new coyned words and Phantastical expressions that some preachers use: and what with want of experience in their own souls, of the nature of conversion: it is to be feared there is a great decay of sound, plain and profitable preaching, especially about the points of justification and conversion.

Next to erroneous preaching 'tis most offensive to an intelligent, and spiritual hearer, when a Minister preacheth with high words, affecting such a stile as is no way suited to the profit of his hearers. And though such may admire themselves, and also have their reward, that is, applause of the ignorant, yet their preaching is nauseated of the judicious. It is a more difficult thing, and requireth more substantial learning, to set forth the mysteries of the Gospel, to the capacity of ordinary hearers, then to stuff Sermons with quotations, Scraps of *Latin* and School terms, made ready to our hands.

But it may be said, seeing that the habit of grace and spiritual Life is infused into the Soul by the spirit of God (as hath been shewn)

shewn :) when a Soul is converted by the preaching of the word, how doth the Lord effect this work thereby? Answer, 1. Negatively.

1. It is not the holiness of the Preacher that doth convert the Hearers. All that heard Christ himself preach, the holiest Preacher that ever was, were not converted.

2. It is not the affections of the Preacher that doth convert the Hearers; his Zeal and his Compassion to the Souls of the people, are very good, and God is pleased so to work, that sometimes the affections of the Preachers do affect the hearts of the Hearers; but except the Lord put in, nothing is done, all his weeping will not break their hearts and reclaim them from their sins.

3. It is not meerly the sublimity and excellency of the matter that is preached, that doth convert the Hearers, for then all should be converted that hear the Gospel preached. It may be the person that is converted at a Sermon, hath heard the same Points opened many a time, and that more fully then at that time, yet was never affected till now; the Reason is, because now God speaketh to
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his heart, as well as the *Minister* to his ear.

4. *It is not the excellency of speech or wisdom of the Preacher that doth convert the Hearers.* All the Oratory in the World cannot convert a Soul: Arguments, Promises, Threatnings, and Intreaties set forth with the Tongues of *Men* and *Angels*, (if they were to assume humane shape and speak to Sinners) about their *everlasting concerns*, could not prevail to bring them from *Sin* to *Christ*, except the Lord put forth his *Almighty power*.

5. *It is not from any power of Nature that before lay dormant and idle, that now awaketh and yieldeth obedience to the Word that a Soul is converted:* For there is no such power of Nature, 'tis an idle speculation of those that think it is so; for in *conversion* the Spirit of God is put into us, and the fear of God, (and so consequently the Seed and Principle of Faith, and Repentance, and other Graces) is put into our hearts where before it was not.

2. Positively I answer, *That the efficacy, power and vertue of the preaching of the Word when a Soul is converted by it, is wholly from the Spirit of God.* When the Scripture saith,
That

That faith cometh by hearing, 'tis only as an outward means that God worketh by, when it pleases him : for bare hearing of the Gospel worketh Faith in no man, for Faith is the gift of God, Ephes. 2. 8. Philip. 1. 29. The fruit of the Spirit, Galat. 5. 22.

And when the Gospel is said to be the power of God unto salvation ; it is not to be understood as if the bare preaching of the Gospel did save and convert men, but it is called *the power of God unto salvation*, in opposition to the *Law* and the *Covenant of works*, because it reveals and holds forth the way of Grace in Christ, by which God saveth lost Sinners, which the Law doth not. How the Spirit of God doth work in and by the preaching of the Word for the conversion of Souls, is a deep mystery. And O that we may experimentally know that the Holy Ghost hath made use of the Word to convert our Souls, though we cannot exactly conceive of the way and manner of his working thereby. The workings of the Holy Ghost in *Conversion* are compared to the wind, as for the freeness and powerfulness, so for the mystery that is in them : *As the wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell*

whence it cometh and whither it goeth, so is every one that is born of the Spirit, John 3. 8.

But for further light into this Question, let us observe these Scriptures following: It is said, *The Lord opened the heart of Lydia that she attended to the things that were spoken by Paul*: Ministers do but call and knock at the doors of mens hearts, 'tis God that by a secret work of his Spirit openeth their hearts, *Acts 16. 14.* And it is said, *Acts 10. 44.* While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them that heard him. Peters preaching, and the Holy Ghosts falling upon them that heard him, were two distinct things, the one might have been without the other, the one was the work of man, the other was the work of God. And that which is said, *1 Thess. 1. 5.* will make it yet far more evident, *For our Gospel came not unto you in word only, but in power and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance*: The Gospels coming to people in word, and in the bare preaching of it, is one thing, and the Gospels coming to them in power and in the Holy Ghost, is another: to some the Gospel comes only in word, they hear a sound of words, and as they are rational

tional men, they may have a notional knowledge thereof; but unto the Elect it comes with power and with the Holy Ghost, even with such powerful workings of the Spirit, as turns them from Sin to Christ. Of these things this is the sum, the preaching of the Word shews us the way of *salvation*, it is the *Spirit of God*, that by a secret and strong hand puts us into that way: The *preaching of the Word* shews us *our lost estate by Nature*, it is the Spirit that inwardly makes us sensible of it, and affecteth our hearts with it: The *preaching of the Word* shews us *Gods Grace in Christ*, holds up *Christ* as the *Brazen Serpent*; it is the *Spirit* that gives us an *eye of faith*, to look to him that we may live: The coming to the Ordinance to hear the Word, is like the Woman in the Gospel, touching the hem of *Christs garment*, others touched him as well as she; but there came a secret vertue from Christ to heal her of her *Bloody Issue*. Many come to the *preaching of the Word*, and to some of their Souls there cometh *secret vertue from Christ*, that they find in themselves, that now they are humbled for sin, now they prize Christ, now they cleave unto the Lord with a full purpose of

heart to walk in his ways: *Praise the Lord for ever.* It was not the Minister, it was not the bare preaching of the Word, that could make this change; but this was *the day of the Lords power to thy Soul*, and vertue came secretly from our *blessed Lord Jesus* to thy Soul, admire him, and love him, and cleave to him, to carry thee on by the same power of his Spirit unto the end. It may be many others in the same Sermon found no vertue come from Christ to their Souls, it was a burden and tedious to them: *Admire free Grace, and love the Lord Jesus for ever.*

When we find good to our Souls by the *preaching of the Word*, we must not look upon poor Ministers with admiration of them, as if by their power and holiness we had such a change wrought in us; but know, *that God hath made bare his own arm*, and glorified his own power and the exceeding riches of his grace in Christ Jesus to us-ward.

And this is one reason why God makes use many times of persons of meaner parts and small repute, to be Instruments of converting more Souls, than he doth of others that excel them, that it may appear that
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the high and excellent power that converts the Soul, is of God and not of man. It is not fit that *the Glory of God* should be given to Ministers and Ordinances, if we get any good to our Souls by them, look upon them but as *the Conduit-pipes*, and let all the *Glory be given to him who is the Fountain of life*; for *thine, O Lord, is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory for ever.*

G 4

CHAP.

CONVERSION

Wrought by the
POWER of GOD

CHAP. V.

Shewing that whatsoever Outward Means the Lord makes use of for the Conversion of Souls, the Work is done by his own Almighty Power.

IT hath been shewn that the Lord in Converting Souls doth usually make use of Outward Means, and especially the preaching of the Word. Now let us enquire more fully how those that were spiritually dead, come to be made alive, and those that were darkness, come to be made light in the Lord.

Those that think man hath such a principle and seed of Grace lying hid in his heart by nature, which if it be drawn forth by persuasions

swasions and exhortations, and man will make use thereof, is sufficient to convert him; do not enough consider how utterly corrupted every man is by the *Fall of Adam*, and without any *spiritual strength*.

It is true, men are reprov'd in the Scripture for *loving darkness rather than light*; and because *they will not come to Christ that they may have life*: But such Scriptures are so far from implying, that we are able to change our own hearts, wills and affections: that they shew the (to us) invincible prejudice and opposition that is in our hearts to the Lord, that we have neither power nor will to turn unto him: such sayings of the holy Scripture do shew what need we have of the exceeding greatness of Gods power to work upon such not onely impotent but wilful and desperate Creatures as all are by nature.

There is indeed a certain kind of willing and running, and striving in natural men upon great Convictions; such as Balaam had, when he said, *Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his*. But this one Consideration will be of much use to guide us in this question, *That when God commands men in his word to pray, to repent, and to believe in Christ*; the meaning is, that

that they do these things from a principle of grace and spiritual life, that God only can work in us, and which we are to look to him for. All the suddain flashes of seeming repentance, and prizing of Christ that come not from a principle of grace infused by the Spirit of God into the heart, but are the meer struglings of an awakened Conscience, to get from under the wrath of God, will bring no man to Heaven; neither do these workings of the heart answer to those Commands of God, to believe, and to repent, but are only a shew of those Graces: they are something like Conversion, but are not Conversion.

This which hath been said, may be Illustrated from the Parable of the stony ground, Matth. 13. to which they are compared that hear the word with joy, and for a time believe, and after fall away: this was only some suddain flash from the natural workings of the heart upon the hearing of the word, accompanied with some common convictions, and common workings of the Spirit: But the Text saith, they had no root, they had not the root and habit of grace in their Souls, planted in them by the Holy Ghost, from whence these things did proceed.

If any shall say, How shall we know these sudden

sudden workings of the heart, and flashes of seeming Conversion that arise but from natural Conscience awakened and startled with common convictions of the Spirit; as in Balaam, Herod, Felix, and such as are described in the Parable of the foolish Virgins, from that believing, repenting, and those spiritual affections that flow from the habit and principle of grace put into the Soul by the Spirit of God. I answer, That the difference may be known by the permanency and continuance. Such sudden flashes as were in Balaam are soon over, and leave the heart unmortified, unpurged: But the principle of grace in the hearts of Believers is eternal and remains for ever; where there is the root of grace in the heart, though it be not always putting forth it self, yet there is a fixed principle and desire in the heart to admire free grace, to prize Christ, and to cleave to Christ, to mourn for sin, and to walk with God, though there is not always the same vigour and activity of grace in such, yet there is a fixed bent and inclination and desire of the heart towards the Lord, which no time can wear off, which no temptations and opposition can wholly quench and extinguish.

But to come nearer to this Point, to
make

make it most manifest, that *Conversion* is wrought by the *meer grace and power of God*.

1. *Many that have the greatest outward means of grace are never converted*: Though they have godly Parents which instruct them diligently, and live under excellent preaching, and have met with many startling Providences and great afflictions, yet they are never brought home to God; when as others that have carnal Parents that set them very bad examples, and have been brought up in ignorant and profane places and families, and have lived where there hath been very poor and dark preaching, are sometimes converted: this shews that *Conversion* is wrought by the *meer grace and power of God*. It may be some godly Parents after many and many prayers for their Children, and great care to instruct them in the ways of God, have so little fruit of all, that they count it a great matter if their poor Children have a little Civility and common Morality; it may be they have not that, but are profane *Esaus*, and rebellious *Ab-soloms*, when as others that have had wicked Parents that prejudiced them what they could against Religion from their Infancy, and when they began to look after Christ, have

have opposed them with great rigour, threatening to turn them out of doors, and never own them, or do any thing for them if they follow Religion; yet they are turned to the Lord, and cannot be beaten off from his ways: this shews that it is the great and invincible power of God that worketh in them that believe.

2. Some at the same time when the Lord began to convince them and convert them, have been going on as desperately and resolutely in their sins as ever they were all their days. As Paul was going to *Damascus* to make havock of the Saints, being (as himself after confessed) mad and outrageous against the Church of God, yet then, and in that Journey the Lord converted him, Acts, 9. was not this the meer grace and power of God?

Some have gone to hear godly Ministers on purpose to scoff at them, or bring them into trouble,, and yet have been Converted at the hearing of them, finding a marvelous working of the Spirit of God upon their hearts, which was very strange to them, and filled them with astonishment at the free grace and power of God.

Some ignorant and carnal people, who at the beginning of a Sermon have slighted and despised it and the Preacher in their hearts,

hearts, and have been filled with indignation, yet by and by before the Sermon hath been ended, something hath been set home upon their hearts, that hath convinced them of their miserable estate, and brought them to Christ for help and salvation.

Some at the same time when they were converted, have been more indisposed and unwilling to hear the word, then at other times, but were even as it were hurried and thrust upon the Ordinance that they knew not how, and when they have come there, have been more drowsie, sleepy, and unwilling to hear the word then they used to be; when lo on a sudden the Lord awakens and startles their Consciences by the Ministry of the Word, as if he himself had spoken immediately from Heaven to them by name, and so the Lord hath made that unlikely time the time of love, and the *Day of his power to their Souls.*

Sometimes when Ministers have been straightned in their affections and expressions in Preaching, more then they have used to be, that they have gone on heavily in the work, and have reflected upon their service with much humiliation to their own Spirits, yet God hath sometimes done much by such weak means, and

and converted some effectually at that time, that there hath been more good done at that time, then at many other times, (so far as comes to their knowledge) when they have been much assisted in the work. God knows how his faithful Servants would preach and set forth his truth, and he is pleased to enlarge things by the inward light of his Spirit upon the minds of the hearers. sometimes above what they did sufficiently clear to them. All these Observations run into this, that God worketh all in all, he is the Author and Finisher of our Faith, and that Ministers can do no good, nor People that hear them receive any good, but as it is given from above, and when he will work nothing shall let it, nor the ignorant indisposedness and prejudice of the hearers, nor the defects and weakness of his Servants that speak in his Name.

3. *Some of the worst natural tempers, not onely of the weakest parts, but of most froward and cross Spirits, are wrought upon by the grace of God; and men of ripe wits, and of more affable and courteous natures are never converted unto God. Those differences among men that arise from their constitutions of body, whether it be for the better or the worse, alter not*

not the case, *God hath mercy on whom he will have mercy*; God can convert those who are of the worst natural tempers, and without he infuse grace, those who are of the sweetest natural dispositions, will never turn unto the Lord; yea the composedness of their natural temper may turn much to their prejudice, making them think they are in a good estate, because they do not break out into such passions and intemperances that others are very Subject to, although they know nothing of any *New birth and sanctifying work of the spirit upon their souls.*

4. *Some very dissolute and prophane persons are converted, and many others that are free from such gross vice are never born again: Publicans, and Harlots, and such as the thief upon the Cross, are sometimes brought to a sight of their sins and to repent and believe in Christ, when others that never were so vile, go on quietly, resting in their formality and morality, and never see their need of Christ and a work of grace upon their hearts, and so perish for ever.*

When God doth convert men that have been *notorious Sinners* filled with all *unrighteousness*, drunkards, swearers, scoffers

scoffers at Religion and old in sin, too habituated and accustomed to all kind of evil, he proclames unto us, *that the power of converting souls is of God and not of man.*

It is true, it doth require the exceeding greatness of Gods power to convince a proud Pharisee, that trusteth in himself that he is righteous and despiseth the righteousness of Christ; that he is in the gall of bitterness and bonds of iniquity and to bring him as a poor, lost and undone Sinner to seek for life from Christ, and in some respects such have greater difficulties to be carried thorough to Christ then others; yet in regard that some of the other sort are so outrageous in sin, and almost down right Atheists that make a mock and jear of all religion and regard of God and the world to come, if the Lord please to convert such (as sometimes he doth) the exceeding greatness of Gods power shines forth most eminently therein.

When the passages of mens Conversion shall be known in the world to come, it will be matter of everlasting wonderment and astonishment to Angels and men, for then it will appear that God is to be

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admired

admired for his free grace, and the exceeding greatness of his power to all that believe.

Lastly, that I may stand no longer upon this Point, let us consider a few places of Scripture more, that beyond all contradiction do establish this truth, that conversion is wrought in the soul of man by the power of God alone. It is said, the exceeding greatness of his power worketh towards them that believe, and that according to his mighty power which wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead, Ephes. 1. 19, 20. He that hath wrought us to the self same thing is God, 2. Corin. 5. 5. Hence it is a very proper expression that wee commonly use when we speak of mens conversion, to say, they were wrought upon at such a time; for indeed except God had wrought them by the exceeding greatness of his power to this self same thing, they had never turned from Sin to Christ. A new heart also will I give you and a new spirit will I put within you, I will take away the heart of stone and give you an heart of flesh, Ezek. 36. 26, 27.

In Conversion the habit of grace is secretly infused into the heart, as life into a dead man; the soul is passive at first: hence it

is said of God in reference unto this work. *Jam. 1. 18. That of his own will begat he us.* [*of his own will*] that shews it is of his *own* meer grace and when it is said [*he begat us*] that shews that it is of his *own* power, and that the Soul is first passive in the work. When a Soul is *converted*, it doth repent and doth act faith on Christ, and is active in a way of Grace, but first the Lord begets us spiritually, and infuses spiritual life.

We must not imagine that the soul never acts at all first or last, and that there are no created *habits of grace*; but first, the Lord infuses the *habit of Grace* wherein the Soul is passive, and the Soul being changed and sanctified thereby through the help and influence of the spirit, exciting and assisting that *New spiritual Life* put into us, we are enabled to put forth acts of *Faith, Repentance* and other *Graces*. First the Lord puts *spiritual Life* into us, and then in him (through his concurrence and secret assistance) we move and act *spiritually and graciously*. The summe of all is this, *God first giveth repentance, and then we repent, God first giveth faith, and then we believe.*

All those Scriptures where it is said, *that God giveth repentance, and giveth Faith, and worketh in us to will and to do*, might all be

insisted on for further confirmation of this truth, *That conversion is wrought by the power of God alone.*

Likewise all those Scriptures that set forth the weakness of the Saints, even after they are in the *state of grace*, how they yet cry out to be *delivered from the body of death*, what need they have of *assisting grace*, of *new influences of the Spirit*, and to be kept and upheld by the *power of God* unto the end of their dayes, and their continual prayers and Supplications to God still to teach them, quicken them, enlarge their hearts, incline their hearts unto his *Testimonies*, and make them to go in the *path of his Commandments* (as *David* did in the Book of *Psalms*) do shew, that we are both at first *converted* and afterwards carried on in Gods wayes, and kept and preserved to the *heavenly Kingdom* by the *power of God alone*, to whom be glory for ever and ever ; *Amen.*

Some are Converted young.

C H A P. V.

Shewing that God Converts men at several Ages, some in Youth, some in their latter time, as it pleaseth him.

NOW if we enquire into the times and seasons when God hath *Converted* those whom he hath *Predestinated* unto Life, there is great variety, according to the *Counsel* of his Will, there is a set time for the new and spiritual birth of the *Elect*, as well as there is an appointed time for every ones first birth and coming into the World. The self same day and hour and moment that God hath decreed from *Eternity*, shall all the *Elect* of God be brought out of the *Egypt* of their natural condition, to travel towards the heavenly Canaan.

Therefore passing by what might be said of Gods *infusing* grace into some in their In-

fancy, as he doth in *Elect Infants* that die in their Infancy, although the manner of his working grace in them, is a great secret to us; I shall only speak of the times and seasons of Gods working grace in them that live some considerable time in the world.

First then I say, that God *converts some in their youth*, yea very young; this we know by Scripture and Experience, *Josiah*, *Obadiah*, and *Timothy* are recorded in the Scripture for early Converts. All should remember their Creator in the days of their youth: and some God helps by his grace so to do. It is a happy thing when in this sense young ones first seek the Kingdom of God, before they seek after *Wealth* or *Wife*, or are scarce capable of regarding such worldly matters. It is infinite mercy to be converted at all, and a great priviledge to be converted young.

1. Those that are converted very young, usually have not such terrours and frights of Conscience as others have in their Conversion, such thundrings and earthquakes of Law terrours, but God speaketh to them with a stiller voice, and deals more gently with them.

Indeed such are sometimes sorely tempted to question the truth of their Conversion, because

cause they have not had such great *terrors of conscience* as some others have had, which they have heard or read of, yet there is no ground for it: for as if a man hath had as great *consternation of Spirit and terrors of conscience* as ever *Cain* and *Judas* had, this were not sufficient to prove that he is converted: So if a man hath had little feeling of *those terrors*, and yet can find that he loathes himself for sin, prizes Christ, believes on his Name, and heartily desires that he should reigne over him, his estate is as good and safe for eternity, as if he had been twenty years under *extream horror of conscience* night and day, and afterwards found peace in Christ.

Secondly. *Those that are converted very young, usually are prevented by the grace of God from committing many grosse sins which others are guilty of, as drunkenness, whoredom, scoffing at religion, and swearing,* (though the two last of these sins now a daies are rise amongst some that are very young, even to amazement) usually Youth is not so debauched, I mean, the beginning of Youth as afterwards; so that if God please to convert one before he hath run into that excessse of riot, it is to be for ever remembered with thankfulness unto the Lord. If our souls ne-

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ver came (in act) into some secret and open wickedness, which naturall men in proceſſe of time as they grow in years do commonly fall into, but that the Lord before our vile nature was ripe for the commiſſion of thoſe ſins, was pleaſed to *Sanctify us* and put his *fear into our hearts* that wee know not what many of thoſe things mean, but by heare-ſay and report we are to take it as a great favour of the Lord.

Yet by reaſon of this, ſome that were converted young are apt to fall into *temptation* and a *ſnare*, being apt to be ever and anon leaning ſomething to their *own righteouſneſs*; But as God taketh them off by his *grace* from putting any confidence therein, and leadeth them forth again by his *holy ſpirit* to account all their blameleſſ walking before or ſince their conversion, but dung in point of *juſtification*, and to the end of their days, after all their doing and ſuffering, deſiring onely to be *found in Chriſt*, having on them *his righteouſneſs* to juſtifie them at Gods Bar. And herein lies much of the light and leading of the ſpirit of God in them that are true Believers, that although others that are ignorant of theſe things, may think that they have not much need of the *righteouſneſs of Chriſt* becauſe they have not been ſtained with groſſe ſins

sin all their dayes, (and they themselves at times may be tempted to such thoughts) yet the Lord shewes them that they are so vile by *nature*, and their *best righteousness* so imperfect, that they have as much need to prize Christ, and to live purely and solely upon *his righteousness*, as any poor creatures in the world.

Again, those that are *converted young*, and have not committed some *gross sins*, that others have committed, are apt to carry it not with that compassion of the ignorant, and of them that are out of the way, and utterly debauched, as those many times do who have run to the same *excesse of riot* and are now *converted unto God*.

Whereas that is the right Spirit of the Gospel to be *very pitiful*, yea very gentle in our carriage to the vilest of man, yet rightly tempered with a holy zeal against sin.

Likewise those that are *converted young*, and have not committed such *abominations* as others have done, are apt to be lifted up with a conceit of their own strength, and not to be so sensible of the *corruption of their natures* as others are; wherefore the Lord doth sometimes leave them unto *great temptations*, and sometimes to fall foully in some things

things for a season (even after their *conversion*) that they may see what is in their hearts, and that they should have been as *vile as any in the World*, if the Lord had not bestowed his *grace upon them*: Whereupon they come to have *great humiliation* before the Lord, and loath themselves in his sight. And if God do keep some that are *converted young* from being tainted with *gross sins*, first or last all their dayes, yet sometimes they may be so near the Commission of them (but that God doth graciously prevent, either by some *special Providence*, or by filling their heart on a sudden with the *blessed Motions of his Spirit*, whereby the *snare is broken*, and they *escape*) that the remembrance thereof is enough to keep them humble all their dayes. Besides, if it have not been so with such that they have not been *almost* in such evils, *almost* *perswaded and enticed to such gross sins*, yet there is the *Sin of our natures*, and the sins of *daily infirmity*, distractions in holy duties, *vaine thoughts*, *sinful passions*, *idle words*, and the like; for which we have cause to lie in the dust before God.

Thirdly. Those that are converted young do many times attain to a higher degree of grace before they die, then others who are converted in their latter time, especially those that are
converted

converted young, and live long afterwards before they finish their course, such have longer time to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and saviour Jesus Christ.

Yet that none that were converted young, may be high-minded but feare, let it be considered that it is not alwayes thus, but some of these through great temptations, and falls into sin, are but weak in grace all their days; and some that were converted many years after them do get the start of them in grace, are more awful of God, more weaned from the world, and more fruitful in their course.

And greatly are some humbled when they count the number of the years since God first wrought upon them, and think with themselves how little communion they have with God, how little mortification to the world, how little service they have done for God, and then look upon others that have been converted many years after them, and see to what a greater measure of grace they have attained. Though they do not envy the goodness of God to such, but rejoyce therein, and give thanks unto his Name for his grace bestowed on them, yet they reflect upon themselves, as those who have quenched and grieved the holy Spirit of God, for which he

is not pleased (they think) to influence and quicken and comfort them, as he doth others, that have been more obedient, and so their souls are greatly abased before the Lord.

Of these things which have been spoken of *conversion in youth*, this is the summe, That it is in it self a *great priviledge*; and yet nevertheless such as are *converted young*, had need to watch and pray, be very humble and diligent least they fall into temptations and snares, and go on verry slowly and heavily in the wayes of God. Likewise from what hath been said, it doth appeare, that how ever wee may be advantaged in some *circumstances* and *priviledges* above others, as in being in Christ before them, and the like; yet without *great supplies of grace* from above, we shall not make a *proficiency* according to such *advantages*.

Before I leave this head it may be profitable to speak some thing more, by way of caution and counsel to those that are converted young.

1. *Have a care of errors of Judgement*, Youth is usually *raw* and *ignorant*; you may have strong and good affections, but it may be weak judgments; go not out of *novelty* to hear *unsound Preachers*, give your selves to *Prayer* and to the reading of the *Word*
attend

attend upon the *Faithful Preaching* of the word by the *Ministers of Christ*.

2. Be much in proving your own selves whether you have a sound work of grace upon your hearts, the end of it usually to them that are sincere is a fuller assurance that they are passed from *Death to Life*.

3. Flee youthfull lusts, as *Paul* exhorted *Timothy*. (2 Epist. 2. 22.) one that was converted young, and was yet but a young man, when the *Apostle* wrote thus unto him; flee pride, flee all kinds of uncleanness, flee unlawful recreations, flee bad company and the like.

Have a care that through ignorance you do not commit some sins in your youth that may wound your consciences much in age: In riper years you may see some things to be sin, which you would not have done in your youth if you had known so much then. Therefore study the *Scriptures* well and beg of *God* to shew you what sins youth useth to fall into, & knows it not then, but it may be afterward to the great wounding of *Conscience*. Intreat the *Lord* that while you are yet young men or Women you may cleanse your way, and take heed thereunto according to his word.

4. Often bless the name of the *Lord* for revealing himself to you so soon in your young and tender years, Wonder at the *Lords* free
grace

grace that he should convert you at all, and labour to be much affected with the time when he did it in the *morning of your lives*, so soon, so early.

5. *Whatsoever difficulties, temptations, and afflictions you go thorough in the course of your pilgrimage, let your hearts trust safely in the Lord, that his grace shall be sufficient for you: He will never leave you nor forsake you; so that you may boldly say, the Lord is your helper, what ever sad lots of affliction are upon you; and that all things shall work together for your good. If God hath been the God and Guide of your youth, he will be the God of your riper years, and though in your latter time you may have great decaies of body, and can do him little service, yet he will be tender of you and care for you, and do you good to gray hairs, and in gray hairs, he will bear you, and he will carry you in his everlasting Arms to Heaven.*

You may have many a *Thorne in the flesh*, many *humbling temptations*, least you should be lifted up, but be not dismayed, for the Lord is your God, and he will strengthen you, he will help you, he will uphold you with the *right hand of his righteousness*.

6. *Admire him that is of power to keep you, and hath kept you, and will keep you in the state of*

of grace unto the end: remember the former dayes when you were first illuminated, what *difficulties* the Lord carried you through, how he made you able, by the *power of his grace*, to break off from evil company, and from your sinful courses, and it may be to endure a great *fight of afflictions* from carnal Parents, and Relations, and acquaintance; and though you were young, youthfull, and very unconstant, yet by the power of God, you were not afraid of any amazement, and could not be turned aside from following the Lord.

Some that are *converted young* are sometimes strengthened with such might by the *Spirit of God*, that though they have carnal Parents and Relations, that oppose them in the wayes of God, they carry it with that *Patience, humbleness of mind* and yet with that *magnanimity and courage*, that is to be wondered at; even while they are young and but Children, they may go through such *difficulties* with a holy rejoycing, as would be hard for them to go through afterwards without very much assisting grace from God.

Remember therefore and forget not the *kindness of the Lord* to you in your youth, and how he hath yet maintained the *work of*
grace

grace in you, keeping *grace* alive through so long a tract of time, as some of you have *walked with God*, who were converted young. And though your *hearts and lives* are not so with God as you would have it, and that you have not yet so far attained as to be perfect, but still groan and sigh being burdened with your *corruptions and temptations*; yet thank and praise the Lord that hath taught you from your *youth up*, and that hitherto he hath kept you in that great and terrible wilderness you have gone thorough, and that his spirit and his feare is yet you.

7. *Have a care of abating in your first love and zeal and sincerity and diligence in following the Lord.* Let the spiritual dew of your youth be alwaies upon you, that you may be alwaies green and flourishing in grace, that as your dayes so may your *spiritual strength* be. Give not the men of the World occasion to say, that your *forwardness in religion in your youth* was because you *wanted wit then*, but that now you are grown wiser, you follow the World as hard as others, take liberty in your conversation as others do, and give over preciseness and strict walking; but let them see that now your judgments are bettered with *age* and much *experience* you still chuse rather to
suffer

suffer affliction with the People of God then to enjoy the pleasures of sin that are but for a season.

Lastly, it is very requisite for those that are converted young and are but yet young to read the Scriptures diligently concerning the duties that God requireth of men in those Relations that his Providence hath put them into, or shall put them into in the world. Study well the duties of Servants and Masters, Children and Parents, Wives and Husbands, and other Relations. As the best Saints are apt to miscarry much in their duties in the Relations they stand in, so especially those that are young, for want of knowledge of what God requires in his Word in those Relations. Therefore art thou called being very young? study upon those duties that the Scripture requires towards thy Parents (if they be yet alive) and make great conscience of them. Art thou called being a Servant, or intended to be so shortly read over those Scriptures that speak of the duties of Servants again and again, pray over those Scriptures often, that God would make thee obedient, diligent, and faithful in that Relation as his Word requires. Art thou called, and art soon to marry, or art newly married? study those Scriptures that con-

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cern that *estate*: and so for Masters and Parents, and the like. The *holy Scriptures* are able to teach you your duties in all these things, that you may be thoroughly furnished with directions from them.

Let no young people despise this counsel, for through their not giving attendance to the Reading & study of *the Scripture* in these things, they many times offend God much, and whatsoever *grace* they have, the *beauty* and *lustre* of it is exceedingly darkned before the eyes of men. We hear of such a young person that is much affected with the *word* and *prayer* much, speaks of good things, and prizes Christ: but when we inquire how doth he carry it to his Parents or his Master, or to his Yoak-fellow, it is oftentimes a grief of mind to the Godly-wise, and makes them they know not what to think, there is so great failing in those duties.

Now I am speaking of the Lords converting some very young. Note this, that sometimes young people, and especially those that have good education live in godly Families, and under the faithful preaching of the word, are much convinced and set upon *prayer*, and others rejoyce and hope that it will be a *through work*; and yet all this comes to nothing, they soon lose
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all sense of those things, and grow more vile in their practises then they were before. And others of them to please their Relations that are godly, after they have lost the power of those *common convictions* they have had, will seem to be religious still for a while, but when their godly Parents are dead, or they come to leave good Families and be for themselves, then they will shew what they are indeed. Some are notable Hypocrites very young, and having good parts, and finding that the profession of Religion makes them acceptable to some upon whom they have dependance, will make a fair shew to deceive others; but let them know, that they deceive themselves most in the end when they come to have their portion with the *Hypocrites*, where there is *weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth*.

I have dwelt long enough upon this first Head, to shew that God doth convert some in youth, yea very young, and have given cautions and counsel unto such. Now to proceed:

Secondly, *God doth convert some in their riper years, in the midst of their days, or in old age, as it pleaseth him.* Abraham in the Old Testament, and *Nicodemus* in the New,

are recorded as persons converted in their riper years and latter time; but whereas some say, shew any other instances besides them of persons converted in their latter time? I will say that we know not the precise age of the three thousand that were converted, *Acts* 2. nor of those *Acts* 4. 5. nor of those Multitudes that were added to the Lord, *Acts* 5. 14. nor of Cornelius his friends, *Acts* 10. upon whom the Holy Ghost fell, neither do we know the precise age of Lydia, the Jaylor, and many others that are mentioned by name in the Scripture, whether they were young or old when they were converted, nor is it necessary for us to know it: It is sufficient for us to know, that whosoever cometh unto Christ, he will in no wise cast out, whether he be young or old.

Those holy men that shew what an unsuitable time old age is, to have then the work to do, to make our calling and election sure, when we can scarce see to read the Scriptures, can scarce hear the word of life that is preached to them, and their Memories and parts extreamly decayed, must not be understood, as if God could not convert such, or never did it, but to shew that the repentance of such is very often feigned and counterfeit, and to warn young people that they

they do not count upon old-age conversion to the neglecting of *remembering their Creator in the days of their youth*. It is a great truth that they say, that God should not be put off to take the dregs of our lives, and to take the Devils leavings, for he deserveth the beginning of our strength, the best of our days, and all our days to serve him, but better late then never, better come into the Vineyard at the eleventh hour then not at all. There have been remarkable conversions of old men recorded by worthy men, O that there were more both young and old brought home to Christ. I know none that will forbid the oldest Sinner to come to Christ: If they do not flatter God with their lips, and feign themselves to be Saints, but are indeed born again, though they be old, they shall enter into the Kingdom of God.

It is true, elder persons that are unconverted are more habituated to sin, and usually more prejudiced against the power of Religion then those that are younger, but they have more sins to humble them, and shew them their need of Christ, if the Lord please to give them a sight and sense of them. God is pleased to convert some that were the most unlikely to find mercy every way,

very ignorant, very profane, and now waxen old also; who would have said or thought that such should ever have turned to the Lord? But is any thing too hard for God? *wonders of grace* are the *greatest wonders* that God doth, and will be the most admired to Eternity.

If any shall enquire further concerning these things, and ask whether God doth convert any now a-days towards the very end of their lives upon their Death-beds, or in a dying hour?

I answer, that although none should presume upon this, and think there is time enough yet to repent and turn to God: yet surely that famous instance of the conversion of the Thief upon the Cross in a dying-hour, is recorded for an encouragement of all such as hereafter come to be sensible of their sins, though very late, that they should not say, *there is no hope*, and that therefore they will not have a thought of looking after pardon in Christ, but that they may see that (for ought they know, there is a maybe of *mercy* yet.

We must not say that *conversion* was never wrought in any in a dying-hour, besides this Thief upon the Cross, 'tis not ordinary indeed for usually as men live, so they

they die, those that lived in gross ignorance and profaneness usually die so, even die like spiritual fools, without sense of sin, without making out after *union with Christ*, and without any serious consideration of that *eternity of happiness or misery* to which they are going: but God may work much upon some very near their deaths, that were very ignorant and vile before, that while men are on this side Hell, and the Gulf is not fixed between them and salvation (how vile so ever they have been all their days) let none take away all encouragement from them to repent and come to Christ.

Indeed it is a difficult thing, and requires much of the wisdom from above in a godly Minister or Christian (who it may be now is sent for to come and discourse with, and pray with an ignorant, profane, sick and dying person, that hated and scoffed all such in times past when the thoughts of death were far from them) to know how to speak to such, so as neither to bolster them up in their ignorance and carnal presumption, nor to hide the Gospel, and the *way to the City of refuge from them*. One that duly weighs all things will find this a hard task indeed. Those that being called to sick and dying persons can upon meer formalities at

an adventure though they be never so ignorant and wicked assure them that all is well, and that they have but a little bodily pain to grapple with, and so to go to Heaven, make easie work of it. But O for one that knows and considers that few are saved, and that *except a man be born again he cannot see the Kingdom of God*, and that understands that this sick-dying person hath been very ignorant, and hath lived without God in the world, to know how to speak rightly; to such requires much heavenly wisdom. The *visitation of sick and dying persons* is upon many accounts a harder work to perform after a right manner then most are aware of, and especially if those persons be ignorant and profane that we are called to visit. Very dangerous is the case of those that are near a dying hour, and are yet unconverted, there is but a step between them and Hell, : O if they were sensible of it, what trembling would take hold of them? but if yet at last the Lord will work grace in them, and say they shall not go down to the *Infernal Pit*, (though they are so near it.) I have found a *ransom*, let none envy the *grace of God* to them. Let none from what hath been said, take heart to go on in their ignorance and profaneness in their health
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and strength, and think all may be well at last, what if now and then a Malefactor hath his Pardon come when he is upon the Ladder, and the Rope about his Neck, and he ready to be turned off, for one such are not many scores executed and put to death. If it were but for the life of your body, you would be loath to trust to that, but men are most careless of their Souls, and though there be a Pardon-Office set up in Christ, yet few look after it in their youth and health, and strength, but think their Pardon will come soon enough to save them from Hell, it may do so, it is well if it do. But O bold sinner, thou run'st a mighty hazard, what if this Pardon never come? What if God say, *Take him Justice, take him Devils, take him Hell, I will shew him no mercy.*

CHAP.

How we may know we are
CONVERTED.

CHAP. VII.

*Of the way how we may know that we are
Converted and passed from Death to
Life.*

WHen a Soul is truly *Converted*, then his *state* is safe for *Eternity*. If one that is *converted* should die presently after (as did the penitent Thief upon the Cross) he is as sure to go to Heaven as if he had lived never so long to serve Christ, and to suffer for his Name in the world : for in the instant of our *Conversion* we receive *Christ*, by whom we are *justified*, and we receive his *Spirit* which shall be in us for ever.

But whether we are to die soon, or to abide many days in this world after our *conversion*, it is very desirable to know this happy change that God hath made of our condition ; for the more assurance we have that God hath called us into the *fellowship* of his Son *Jesus Christ* our Lord, the more
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we shall love God, praise God, rejoyce in God; the more patient in *afflictions*, the more willing to bear the *Cross*, the more desirous to depart and to be with *Christ*: And in a word, the clearer our *union with Christ is to us*, the more sweet and easie will all the *duties of Religion be to us*, and the more holy and fruitful shall we be in our whole course, and that from a principle of *Gospel ingenuity and gratitude*: We shall be the more constrained by the love of *Christ* to live to him, when we know and are assured he hath died for us, and as a *fruit of his death*, hath drawn us unto himself. Those that would have them that are in *Christ*, to be always in suspense and stand in doubt of their *eternal conditions*, accounting it a piece of *Christian humility and holy modesty* so to do; yea, thinking such a frame to be a great *preservative from sin*, and a *spur to quicken them to more diligence in Gods ways*, then if the *assurance of the love of God* were shed abroad in their hearts by the *Holy Ghost*, do erre, not considering so fully the *nature of Gospel Grace*, and a *lively hope of salvation*, that it doth *strengthen and enlarge the Soul in holiness and obedience*, by urging new and further motives to our *walking with God and fruitfulness before him*.

It is the duty of all to try their spiritual estates and not to rest satisfied in some probability of the *truth and power of grace* in them, but to give diligence to the attaining of a full assurance thereof.

Wherefore are we called upon so often in the Scripture, *to prove our own works, to examine our selves whether we be in the faith or no, to give diligence to make our calling and election sure*, if it be not that those that are not yet converted may find it out, that they may not deceive themselves, but now look after *union with Christ*, which yet they have not, and that those that are converted indeed may be assured of it, and so rejoyce and give praise, and be stirred up *to walk worthy in all things of the vocation wherewith they are called*.

If a man be not yet truly converted unto God, it is better for him to know how his condition is, though for the present it fill his Soul with much *anxiety and fear of the wrath to come*, then that he should go on quietly and presumptuously to Hell. If we be foolish Virgins, without the Oyle of grace in our vessels, 'tis better to know it now whilst Oyl may be got, then not to know it till time is past, and the door is shut.

Many are greatly offended when they
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are put upon trying their *spiritual estates*, they say, *such preaching troubles their consciences*, they are loath to see in what a miserable condition they are, but if the Lord delight in them to make them his people, they will bless God that ever they sate under such an *awakening Ministry* by which the Lord brought them to see they were in the *broad way that leadeth to destruction*, and brought them out of it unto Christ.

Now then in answer to this great Question, *How may a man know that he is truly converted, and in the state of grace?*

1. *It may be known by discerning the work of grace upon the Heart.*

2. *It may be known by the more immediate testimony of the spirit.*

1. *Conversion may be known by discerning the work of grace upon the heart. If a man think himself something when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself, Gal. 6. 3. Well then how shall such a man be undeceived? v. 4. Let every man prove his own work, so shall he have rejoycing in himself alone, and not in another. That is, let him try whether the Lord hath began the good work of grace in him, let him prove and examine himself, whether he hath true faith, true repentance, true love to God, true love to the brethren, so shall he*

he have rejoycing in himself alone, discerning that God hath wrought in him those things that accompany salvation, and not rejoyce meerly in the good opinion of others, who though they be gracious and *spiritual*, may easily be deceived in judging of the *spiritual estate* of others, being not so suspicious of others as they are of themselves, and know not the *secret passages* between God and their Souls, as they know things between God and themselves.

Many Scriptures might be brought to shew that we are to take this course in judging of our *spiritual estates*. Hereby we know that we know him, if we keep his *Commandments*, 1 John 2. 3. Hereby know we that we are in him, v. 4. We know that we are passed from death to life because we love the brethren, 1 John 3. 14. Those that deny *inherent grace* in those that are converted, or would not have them to try their *spiritual estates* thereby, are much mistaken.

Let those who would know whether they be yet converted, let themselves as in the presence of the Lord, and examine themselves whether the Lord hath made them sensible of the danger and evil that there is in sin? whether the Lord hath taken them off from trusting in their own righteousness and strength? whether the Lord hath revealed
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Christ to them as Mediator, and fixed their hearts to put their whole trust in him, Whether the Lord hath wrought in them godly sorrow for sin, and put a new bent of holiness upon their hearts, to desire and endeavour to walk so as to please God.

He that would have these things more fully opened, let him remember or look back to the Third Chapter, where I have shewn more largely what Conversion and Special Grace is, and to let him examine himself accordingly. But that I may (through the grace of Christ) be further helpful to those who would try their spiritual estates, to find out what God hath done for their Souls, let these things be observed:

1. That the work of grace is not always alike visible and discernable in a Child of God, neither to himself nor others with whom he hath to do. Through bodily distempers, through violent temptations, through sore falls into sin, and great dissensions and hidings of Gods face, (from none of which a Child of God is wholly exempted in this life) it may come to pass that a true Saint may be very hard put to it to discern the work of grace in himself, yea very much fear that he hath no true grace, and walk in darkness and trouble of spirit thereupon. With some it is thus a great while, God orders it thus (amongst other

other holy ends of his) by such examples of troubled Consciences, to put others upon more tryal of their *spiritual* estates, to draw forth our pity and compassion to such as are in these *spiritual* distresses, and to make us more thankful for the *light of Gods spirit*, to discern the *work of grace* in ourselves, which these poor sorrowful ones cannot attain unto, and to shew us that which I am now upon, *that grace being so little in the best*, is sometimes scarce discernable, especially when the body is sickyl and distempered, and there is some special *hour* and *power of darkness* upon us.

By the way, I am afraid that sometimes godly *Ministers* unawares may deliver some things that may much puzzle poor *Christians* about trying the *work of grace* upon their hearts, and bring them into *great darkness* and *trouble of spirit*. However that which I shall take notice of may be a Caution to such as shall read these things, that they do not so, I have observed that *Ministers* do sometimes speak so unwarily of the *signs of this grace*, and the other, that those *signs* which they lay down, are *signs* only of the *high actings of that grace*, and are not to be brought in as *tryals* whether a person hath the truth of that grace which may be, and
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yet not those *high actings* of it. I affect plain-
ness and not obliquity, therefore I would
try to make out my observation better, sup-
pose a Minister is preaching about *the nature*
of Faith, and shall make this a sign to the
people to *try their Faith* by, if they can be-
lieve at all times that God will bring about
every particular thing for them, which their
eyes are towards him, for and which he hath
promised without *hesitation*, wavering and
considering and poring upon those things
that stand in the way of the mercy; and for
this quote *Abrahams Example* that *when he*
had the promise of a Son in his old Age, *he*
considered not his own body, nor yet the dead-
ness of Sarahs womb, Rom. 4. 18. 19. where-
as it is said there; *that he being not weak in*
faith, but strong in faith, was enabled to do
so. That such things must be brought in as
examples of what *believers* should do, and
of what *believers* are sometimes enabled
through the grace of God to do, even to act
faith very highly and strongly, and not to
prove that he is not a *true believer* that doth
not alwayes thus. And so if this be laid
down as a tryal of Faith that one that hath
true faith will not be daunted in the times of
the greatest peril nor use sinful waies to
bring himself out of trouble, and quote for

this the Heroick courage of the three Children before *Nebuchadnezzar*, *Daniel* 3. and *Dauids* encouraging himself in the Name of the Lord when *Ziklag* was taken, and the people spake of stoning him, *1 Sam.* 30. 6. How may this puzzle poor souls, and make them reflect upon themselves, as if they had no true faith because it may be they have found many fears in time of danger, and used some sinful shifting in time of trouble. Yea, and did not those men who were so Famous in their generations Falter much in their Faith and courage sometimes as *Abraham* when he twice denyed *Sarah* to be his Wife as wee see in *Geneses*, and *Peter* when he denyed Christ, and yet still the habit of Faith remained with them, and *David* though all that time before mentioned he was bold in his God yet all other times how fearful was he, and that presently after God had eminently appeared for him *1 Sam.* 27. 1. and then he was fore afraid of *Achish* King of *Gath* and changed his behaviour, and feigned himself mad and scrabled at the doors of the gate &c. all to get out off the danger he was in. Therefore careful must we be when we set before others tryals of the grace of God in them, that we do not take Scriptures that speak of the saints of old when they

they acted grace highly, and urge this upon people that if they do not alwaies so they have not the *truth of grace* in them, Indeed such examples of the Saints should be insisted on to shew others what they should do in like cases, but not to make them tryals of *the truth of their grace*, so as that they should conclude they have not the *truth of grace* except they are in every thing at all times assisted and influenced by the spirit of God, as they were sometimes. *Abraham David and Peter, sometimes acted above themselves* through the strong help of assisting grace, and *sometimes acted as much below themselves*, thorough the power of temptations, and the remainder of corruption that was in them, and so it is with other Saints. He therefore that will not lay a stumbling block before the weak in speaking of these things, must carefully distinguish between what a true Saint is in his principles, desire and bent of his heart, in which he is holy and gracious (for the Law of God is in his heart) and what he is or may be in some particular acts in which he may discover many fallings: We must distinguish between what a Saint should be, and would be, and what he is and attaineth to in this life, we must distinguish between what a Saint is sometimes when he

is strongly influenced and assisted by the holy Ghost, and what he is at other times when the Lord leaves him (in part) for his humiliation, and that he may see what is in his heart. We must distinguish between what a true Saint is in his main course, so he walketh with God, and what he is at sometimes when as (Paul himself saith) the evil which he would not do, and that which he hates that he doth. The life of grace in the hearts of believers is a great mystery, the flesh opposeth the spirit, and the spirit the flesh in them, the flesh and corruption in them cannot precipitate them to evil, as it would, because of the spirit and grace of God that opposeth it, and the grace and new Nature that is in a Saint, cannot do the good that it would because of the flesh that opposeth it.

All that I aim at is, that as Ministers doctrine should be quick and powerful to convince ignorant and presumptuous Sinners, that they are in the way to destruction, so they should be careful at the same time that they do not *quench the smoking flax nor break the bruised Reed*, puzzling and making sad any righteous ones, whom God would not have made sad, remembering that it is one end of the Ministry of the Gospel that we should be helpers of their joy; and so
much

much for this digression.

Grace is not alwaies alike visible in true believers as hath been shewn sometimes, the Saints walk in the Sun-shine: and sometimes in the dark, therefore it is needful that we should be often trying our spiritual estates and sometimes set special times apart for self examination, if happily we may find that God hath called us into the fellowship of his Son Iesus Christ our Lord.

2. *In trying our spiritual estates by signs of the work of grace upon our hearts, it is best ordinarily to try our selves about the main things wherein the work of grace doth principally consist: as to try whether we have true faith in Christ, true repentance, true love to God, and the like; or else, through our weakness we are apt to be confounded by a multitude of signs, this way is safe enough, for where there is only grace in truth there is all, at least in the root and habit.*

3. *In trying and examining the work of grace upon our hearts, we must pray for the light of the spirit to shew us those graces that he hath wrought in us, otherwise it will be hard to discern them. The Holy Ghost can put a lustre and shine upon our graces, and when the Conscience is in great distress, can say, be not afraid Christ is here, see thou believest*

in him, thou fearest God, and lovest him in sincerity.

When a *believer* is examining the *work of grace* upon the heart, sometimes the *holy spirit* is pleased to put *Grace* into *fresh actings*, whereby it is more easily discerned ; as for example, when a *Believer* is examining whether he hath *true Faith in Christ*, the *Holy Ghost* doth sometimes put that *grace* into act at that very time, and then he can say, *Lord I believe, I see faith at this very time working in my heart*, and so for other *graces* ; as *repentance, love to God*, and the like ; When it is thus, a *poor believer* goes thorough the *work of self examination*, with great satisfaction and delight, and if it be not always so, yet let a *Believer* pray and search into his heart, and wait upon the Lord : If he hide his face, yet wait upon him for a good hour when he will come unto us and comfort us.

4. *The stronger the habit of grace in the heart is, and the more frequent and constant the actings of grace are, the more easily may we come to the knowledg and assurance of the work of grace in us.* If *faith* were stronger in the habit and more frequent in the act, we might have more assurance that we have the *truth* of that *grace*, and usually it is so, that such have

have most assurance, the like may be said of repentance, love to God, and other graces.

Happy is it, when a man can truly say, shall I question the truth of my faith in Christ, when through the grace of God who hath wrought my heart to this self same thing, I find a strong bent upon my heart to cleave to Christ as my Mediatour for ever. I am continually looking to him he is precious to me the Meditation of him is sweet to my soul, I have counted, do count, and will for ever count, all things but dung in comparison of him, shall I question the truth of my repentance, when I find that I have continual sorrow in my heart for my sins and sighs, and cry continually to be delivered from all my corruptions. I say happy is that man whose grace is so strong and in such continual motion and action such a man can more easily discern the truth of it let us pray and wait for this.

5. Believers must not be taken up wholly in trying of themselves whether they are in the state of grace or no; but press forwards in putting forth New acts of Faith, New acts of repentance, New acts of love to Christ, and New acts of mortification of Sin. That we may grow up into him in all grace, who is our head even Christ.

Yea, sometimes former *grace* received may be many ways so obscured, yea weakened, that there is no other way to recover the vigour and comfort of *grace*, but for the Soul to believe in Christ; repent and turn to God as if it were but now to begin to follow Christ.

Secondly, *Conversion and the work of grace upon the heart, is sometimes manifested to us by the more immediate testimony of the spirit.*

If the holy Ghost do indeed perswade and assure our hearts that we are in the love and favour of God, then we are effectually called, for though God loveth those whom he hath chosen from everlasting, and the giving of Christ to die for them, and his drawing them to Christ is from that free love and good pleasure of his will towards them, yet until a person be converted the holy Ghost doth not assure him, that God hath ordained him to eternal life. Those whom God hath foreknown, he hath predestinated from eternity to the adoption of Children by Jesus Christ, but till they be actually sons and daughters which is not till their conversion and believing in Christ, *John. 1. 12. The Lord doth not send his spirit into their hearts to enable them to cry Abba Father. The Lord indeed sendeth his spirit into the hearts of the Elect*

Elect to convert them and work faith in them (for without the spirit it could never be done) but it is an after work for the spirit to come into our hearts enabling us to cry, *Abba Father*; assuring us that we are the Children of God, *Rom. 8. 16.* And shedding abroad and pouring in the love of God to us in particular into our hearts *Rom. 5. 5.*

We must not think, that the holy Ghost at first dash doth assure a person that God hath ordained him in particular to eternal life, before he infuse the habit of grace and spiritual Life into him, but first the holy Ghost having convinced the soul of sin, and convinced the Soul of righteousness to justify, to be in Christ, and in him alone doth enable the soul to apply Christ, and come unto him, and afterwards as it pleases him doth manifest to the soul the truth of his faith, and his pardon through Christ. The Holy Ghost works as a Sanctifier, before he workes as a Comforter, the Holy Ghost workes faith in the heart before he fill with joy and peace, which is onely in believing in Christ; and discerning the fruits of our *Union* with him.

The manner how the Holy Ghost doth assure us that we are the Children of God, is a great mystery. When the Holy Ghost clears

clears to us the work of grace upon our hearts, this is one way that he doth witness to us that we are the Children of God. But sometimes he doth it more immediately, that when the believer hath not been at that time trying his spiritual estate, or it may be is in great heaviness through manifold inward temptations, and outward dangers, and afflictions; suddenly the Holy Ghost makes him to triumph in Christ and rejoyce with joy unspeakable and full of glory. Indeed this way of the spirits witnessing to the soul, though it is most refreshing and ravishing, yet it is not so ordinary as the other, and it is more transient and quickly passing away: and is rather a cordial for some frowning fit or some *Antidote* to strengthen the heart in some great approaching service or tryal then the common food of the Saints in this life.

If any shall say, *how do Believers know the voice and witness of the spirit speaking peace, and joy, by Jesus Christ to their souls from a delusion*, I answer.

1. *By a certain spiritual instinct which no man knows but him that hath it; by this they know the voice of the spirit from the voice of a stranger.*

2. *By the signs that follow this voice and*
Witness

Witness of the spirit raising our hearts to look to Christ the Mediatour. As he from whom all our springs are admiring the love of the father in giving him to be the propitiation for our sins; loathing of our selves for our iniquities and stronger desires to walk in universal obedience to the Lord.

But now because some seem to examine themselves little concerning the work of grace upon their hearts, but in giving a reason of the hope they have, that they are passed from death to life, speak not of their faith, repentance and other graces: but say that they had such and such a word, given in as for example I have loved thee with an everlasting love, or I have blotted out as a thick Cloud thy transgressions, and will remember thy sins no more; *Fear not I am with thee, be not dismayed, for I am thy God be of good cheare, thy sins are forgiven thee or the like.* This question may be moved hereupon.

Quest. When a man hath some promise or word of grace come into his thoughts so as to make impression upon his heart, and quiet him as to his feare of the wrath of God: how shall he know that this is spoken by the spirit to witness to him, that he is the Child of God or whether it be a delusion.

Ans.

Answ. 1 That the holy Ghost doth sometimes comfort the hearts of believers, by some promise or word of grace mentioned in the Scripture is not to be questioned.

As the Holy Ghost in convincing men of sin and their last estate by nature doth often make use of some places of Scripture, as for example the wages of sin is death, the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all unrighteousness of men, and setles home the commandments of the Law with the curse annexed to the breach of them in particular to the soul, as if the Lord did speak from heaven, to that particular person, *I have said in my Law; thou shalt have no other Gods before me? But thou hast made riches thy God, thy belly, thy God, thy Name and esteem amongst men thy God; therefore thou art cursed: I have said in my Law thou shalt not take my Name in vain but thou hast done it, I have said thou shalt keep my sabbath Holy, but thou hast not regarded it; and so thou hast broaken this commandment, and the other, I have said cursed is every one that continueth not in everything, that is written in the book of the Law, to do it therefore thou art under the curse: and what wilt thou do. As the holy Ghost, I say doth often set home such Scriptures*
to

to convince men of sin, and shew them their need of Christ, so doth the Holy Ghost many times make use of other Scriptures that hold forth Gods free grace in Christ ; both at first to work faith and draw the soul to Christ, and afterwards to fill the heart with joy and peace in believing.

Therefore it is a sign of a prophane heart, and destitute of the knowledge of conversion, and of the comforts of the holy Ghost, to make a mock and jeare of Scriptures, and promises given into and set home upon the spirits of men.

2. Sometimes promises and words of grace are given into the soul to work grace at that time, and not to witness that grace was wrought before, for we ordinarily receive the spirit to work grace at first in us by hearing in the preaching of the word (or else darted more immediately from God into our souls) some promise or declaration of Gods grace in Christ, and if that be all our mistake, that at such a time when we thought the Holy Ghost set home such or such a promise ; and word of grace upon our hearts, to assure us that we were the Children of God, that he did it at that time to work the first special grace in us, and unite us unto Christ ; so that, that was the
time

time of our first receiving Christ: If this I say be all the mistake it is not dangerous.

3. Lastly it must be granted that all that have a promise or word of grace, come into their minds yea though it take some impression on them and quiet their thoughts and affect them with a kind of joy for the present, have not these words given in by the spirit of God either to work saving grace in them at that time, or to bear witness to them that they are in the state of grace, for such as are compared in the Scripture to the stony ground, do sometimes hear the word with joy and consequently have it come into their thoughts, with some flashes of joy and those that fall away do tast of the heavenly gift, and after a sort are made partakers of the Holy Ghost *Heb. 6.* In some of his common motions, and impressions upon their hearts as hath been opened more largely before. so that for a conclusion of this matter. If there be not a work of grace wrought in the heart, even an abiding work as well as promises & words of grace, that transiently and suddenly pass thorough the thoughts we may be fearfully mistaken about our spiritual estates. But if we can find such faith in Christ, such repentance, and such love to God wrought in us as have before been spoken

ken of, the more promises and words of grace are cast into our thoughts the better, for they strengthen true believers in holiness and communion with God; and are as so many love-tokens send them from Jesus Christ by the spirit, till they come to him in heaven. Hypocrites and notional professors turn such promises and words of grace into wantonness, and into a snare to their own souls, but true believers get real good by them, and lay up these sayings in their hearts and cleave the more unto the Lord in faith and holiness.

Thus I have endeavoured to shew how we may know we are in the state of grace, let me speak a word or two to those that are converted and have had it cleared up to their souls that it is so

10. Praise the Lord for the exceeding riches of his grace. Be content yea rejoyce and be thankful whatever sad loss of outward trouble and affliction lye upon you, grace hath abounded towards you, the Lord hath not dealt so with many others as he hath dealt with you, look round about you and see what multitudes lye in wickedness in grosse ignorance and prophaneſs, and live without God in the world, what if you be poor in the World; you are heirs of Gods Kingdom

Kingdom what if you have not health of body as others have, you shall soone leave this ruinous earthly Tabernacle ; and be with Christ in Paradise, and he will also raise up this poor frail body, and make it like to his glorious body, at the last day what if near relations Father and Mother should forsake you, the Lord hath taken you up into his everlasting Armes where he will hold you for ever, what though the world hate you, and curse you, the eternal God hath loved you and blessed you in Christ.

Rejoycing in the Lord and praising him continually, are comely for those that are converted and pardoned in Christ? *O sing and give Praise.*

2 After God hath once given you a comfortable assurance of your conversion, do not call all in question upon every fit of deadness and darkness, that comes upon your Spirits. Be humbled for the least sin, but say not upon every spiritual fall that if there had been truth of grace; you had never done thus, for after conversion there remaineth in this life flesh and corruption, that is not wholly taken away, till death. Then indeed the house of the Old Man will quite fall, and all these Philistines die with us.

This

This makes poor Believers with *Sampson* desire to die that all their lusts may die too.

Neither do you call all into question, because of outward afflictions, how great and many so ever they are, *for whom the Lord loveth, he chastneth, and correcteth every son whom he receiveth.* But say in your hearts the Lord hath humbled us for our sins, drawn us to Christ, put his fear into our hearts; and hath given us many times gracious hints of his favour to us in Christ, and now though he seem to walk contrary to us in some outward dispensations, and breaks us in our relations, and breaks us in our estates and breaks us in our esteem, and breaks us in our health (as it was thus with *Jacob*) yet will we trust in him; and say that still he is our Father, and will not alwaies chide nor retain his anger for ever.

3. Let those that are converted, hate every false way, and meddle with sin no more we may well say the time past suffices, and yet we have had to much of sinning already. The state of grace is so far from giving any liberty to sin, that it layes more obligation to holiness, have a care of the sins of the daies wherein we live, worldliness, mispending of time in unprofitable talk, bitterness against those that differ never so little from

us in judgment neglect of training up Children in the fear of God, and reverence and subjection to their parents, want of heavenly discourse, pride in apparel, false and long haire; and abundance of other sins that are to rise amongst some that make a great profession of Religion.

4. Shew forth the Praises of him that hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light, shew forth his praises not only in words, but in works, glorifie him on the earth; let not his high and holy Name be blasphemed through you. Be exceeding tender of the Name and glory of God: make not Religion to stink, and the savour of it to be abhorred by your covetous practices, proud carriage, loose conversation, adorn the profession of religion with a serious chearfulness, a meek zeal, a heavenly diligence in your callings, and with a loving and yet a convincing conversation to the World; these things may well go together and should do so. Christians should be serious and yet chearful, they have most cause to rejoyce: and shall do it when others shall weep and howl; and gnash their teeth. Christians should be meek, peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated and yet zealous magnanimous and valiant for the truth. Christians should be

be heavenly in their thoughts and affections and discourse, and yet diligent in their outward callings, heavenly mindedness makes the yoke of outward labour easier, and the burden of it lighter. Christians should be affable, courteous, loving to all, yet so far from sinful compliance with the waies of the world, that they should hold forth the grace of Christ, in their conversations that others may be convinced that they are the Children of God, and that though possibly they may rail at them with their mouths, they may secretly commend them in their consciences and wish their death at last end might be like theirs.

A concluding Speech to the
UNCONVERTED.

CHAP. VIII.

*Containing advice and counsel to those
 who are yet unconverted.*

HAVING shewn the necessity of conversion, the Nature and signs of it, I shall now conclude with some advice and council to those who are strangers to any work of grace upon their hearts, but are going on in ignorance and blindness and see not into what a gulph and bottomless pit of destruction, they are going.

Wonder not that I am earnest in such a matter, and tell you so much of Hell and damnation, it is to stop them that being spirituall y blind and desparate, are running into the lake of fire and brimston, which burneth for ever. Well then let me direct my speech unto such, if God peradventure will give them repentance that so they may be
 reco-

recovered out of the snare of the Devil, and escape everlasting destruction.

Hearken and give ear to this Alarm that is now sounded to you that are yet ignorant, and careless of the things that belong unto your everlasting peace, Repent, repent, get into Christ, the City of refuge quickly, quickly before the Lord come forth against you in his wrath and fury, and you be cast into Hell. I shall endeavour to set before you, the miserable condition, you will be in to eternity, if you die in your sins and to that end I shall shew you three things.

1. *The certainty of Hell.*

2. *the misery of Hell.*

3. *The eternity of Hell.*

1. *Consider the certainty of Hell.* This is that which I would speak of first, That there is a place of torment and extream misery into which the wicked are cast, their souls entering first into this woful place as soon as they depart this life; and at the Day of Judgment their bodies being raised by the Almighty power of God shall be united again with their souls, that so both in body and soul, they may bear the wrath of God for ever.

It may be some that may read this may be so ignorant and prophane that they may think

think that Hell is a fable devised to keep me in awe, and think them fools that are scar'd with it, therefore let me endeavour to convince them of it, for it doth appear indeed by the lives of too many, that they believe neither Heaven nor Hell, yet there are such fools that say in their hearts, there is no God too, *Psal. 14. 1.* They say so in their hearts, and say so in their lives, though few of them are so impudent as to say it with their mouths.

To prove that there is a Hell, I might shew that the very heathens as they have a Notion that there is a God, so they have a Nation that there is a Hell; a state and place of misery into which evil men go after this life, likewise I might shew that the boldest Atheists are sometimes struck with a Pannick fear of Hell, all which proves that it is an universal Notion of mankind, that the soul is immortal, and that there is happiness or misery after this life though Atheists smother this conviction what they can. But I shall onely insist upon Scripture proof of this point.

The wicked shall be turned into Hell, Psal. 9. 18. How can ye escape the damnation of Hell, Mat. 23. 33 Fear him that is able to destroy Soul and body in Hell, Mat. 10. 28.

God

God speared not the Angels that sinned but thrust them down to Hell, 2 Pet. 2. 4.

To name no more particular places, when ye read in the Scripture of everlasting punishment, the wrath to come, unquenchable fire, all those expressions, point at the same thing.

As there is a real Hell, as well as there is a real Heaven, so there is a local Hell, as well as there is a local Heaven. Hell and Heaven are not expressions, onely to set forth the two states and conditions of men after this life, but the two places, to one of which all go at death.

Let none out of curiosity enquire where Hell is, 'tis sufficient that the Scripture tells us that there is a Hell, and tells us what will bring us thither that we may avoid it and that Christ onely can deliver us from it that we may make sure of our interest in him.

2. Consider the misery of Hell. Though there be a Hell, yet if it were a tollerable good place and condition though far inferior to Heaven it was not to be so much feared but O let us consider the misery of Hell.

I might insist upon that which is commonly called the punishment of loss that is what

the damned are deprived of, and what sad reflections they may make upon that account, being not onely deprived of all the creature comforts which once they enjoyed in this world (which the Saints in Heaven cannot reflect upon as any loss to them, because God is there all in all, and better then all to them) but they are seperated from God, from any hope of his favour and enjoyment of him shut out of the place where he shews the riches of his glorious Kingdom and the honour of his excellent majesty to the Angels and Saints, not for a time onely but for ever. Shut out of the company of the Holy Angels and Saints. Surely these things gall the spirits of the damned. If *Eſau* wept so bitterly for that he had lost the birthright, and lost an earthly Fathers blessing how bitterly may the damned weep that they have lost Heaven, and the blessing of the Father of Spirits? What better reflections the damned make upon their fall in *Adam* (which now so little affects the generality of men) and their great loss thereby we cannot conceive now, nor how it will vex and fret them to think (some of them) what means of grace they enjoyed in the powerful preaching of the Word, and good council of Parents, Masters, and Friends but

but that they have lost all those advantage^s for Heaven which once they had, and made light of.

But let me speak something of that positive misery or punishment of sense, that the damned undergo.

1. *They are miserable for their place.*
2. *They are miserable for their company.*
3. *They are miserable for the wrath of God which They beare, this is the worst of all.*

1. *They are miserable for their place.* I shall not stand much upon this but surely Hell is a doleful place, therefore compared to Tophet, *Isa. 30. 33. To a bottomless pit, Rev. 9. 2. Utter darkness, Mat. 22. 13.*

Heaven is called *Paradise, Luke. 23. 43. Hell a Prison, 1 Pet. 3. 19.* But I but touch this for the truth is as the enjoyment of God in Heaven, is the Heaven of Heaven, the best of Heaven, and not meerely the splendour and glory of the place (though it is a glorious place) so it is the bearing of the wrath of God in Hell, that is the Hell of Hell, the worst of Hell, though it is also a doleful and miserable place.

2. *They are miserable for their company.* Now men are fit to go out of their wits if the Devil appear to them, what will they do, how will they be eternally scared and aig-
ed

ed when they know they are amongst a throng of them shut up with them in the same eternal Prison.

That Devils and damned Men and Women shall lie together in the same place of torment, is cleare from the sentence of condemnation, at the last day, *depart from me ye cursed into everlasting fire prepared for the Devil and his Angels*, Mat. 25. 41.

As those of the Children of men that are saved shall be in the same Heaven with the elect Angels, and their company will be a great refreshing to them, so those that are damned shall be in the same Hell, with the fallen Angels, the Devils and their company will be a great terrour to them.

And as much as prophane men delight in one anothers company, now it will be very grievous to them in Hell. To hear one anothers, howlings, weeping, wayling, groanings, and bitter Lamantatioas will surely be very terrible, and especially the company of those that have been partners in sin, fellow-drunkards, fellow-thiefs, fellow-persecutors, fellow-wantons, will be very grievous. O how they will curse one another and curse the days that ever they saw one another.

3. *They are miserable for the wrath of God that*

that abideth on them. It is not meerly the place nor the company that makes them miserable, but the sting of Hell is the mediate sense and feeling of the wrath of God in an unportable manner, this is their pænal Hell, which is worse than their local Hell.

As God lets out his love and makes great impressions thereof upon the spirits of the Saints in Heaven, so he lets out his wrath and makes great impressions thereof upon the damned in Hell.

The damned are said in the Scripture to be *punished, tormented, beaten with stripes, burnt with unquenchable fire*, all to shew how the wrath of God lies very hard upon them.

It is true there are degrees of torments in Hell, more and fewer stripes a great difference, there is no doubt of the sufferings of the damned, some receive greater damnation, and beare more wrath then others, 'tis according as men have sinned more or less in this world (I speak of those that perish) that they are punished more or less in Hell. But surely those that have fewest stripes, and the coolest places in Hell, have a sad portion.

If people do verily believe that there is a Hell, yet few believe the extremity of misery

ed when they know they are amongst a throng of them shut up with them in the same eternal Prison.

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If people do verily believe that there is a Hell, yet few believe the extremity of misery

sery that is suffered there.

I remembre a poor Woman that suffered death for being a Witch, told me, that after she had made a contract with the Devil, she began to be much afraid of Hell, as a miserable place and condition, whereupon the Devil told her that Hell was not so bad a place as people thought, that he was the prince of the aire that people lived very well in his dominions, and that she for her part should be an hostess and keep a fair Inn there. It was to this purpose what this poor ignorant Woman told me. The Devil hath scarce the face to tell his followers that there is no Hell but rather that it is a tollerable good place and not bad as some zealous preachers would make them believe.

At another time I heard a prophane man when he was told of Hell fire say, I hope there are some ponds of cold water there to where I may go and cole my self when I am heated and scorched with the flames, thus fools now make a mock of sin and a mock of Hell too, till they come to it and then they will be past their jesting. Hell torments put the greatest wits, and the most sanguine tempters past their Joaks and meriment. Many go laughing and merry to Hell but when they come once there, they laugh no more
for

for there is nothing but weeping, and wayling, and gnashing of teeth in Hell.

3. *Consider the eternity of Hell.* Though there be such misery in Hell, yet if men were to be there but a little while, it were not so much to be feared, but none that go thither return again, neither take they hold of the paths of Life. Therefore 'tis said in the Scripture, that the wicked go into everlasting punishment as the righteous go into life eternal *Mat. 25. 46. They shall be punished with everlasting destruction, 2 Thes. 1. 9. Their Worme dieth not, and the fire is not quenched Mark. 9. 44.*

It is true, that neither utter despaire nor eternity of suffering are of the essence of the punishment due to sin, for if men could satisfy the justice of God for the debt of sin, there were no cause of dispaire, neither would they be detained for ever under the wrath of God, but the damned being never able to make satisfaction for their sins, it doth unavoidably follow that they are swallowed up of dispaire, and that the wrath of God abideth on them for ever.

Now let those who go on desperately in their ignorance and prophaneſs, consider these things before it be too late, before the decree hath brought forth before the gulph
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is fixed, and the day of grace be over.

God hath made a Hell for the glory of his Justice to shine in, and all impenitent and unbelieving sinners shall be as fuel for his Holy Justice to burn upon for ever. Tremble, tremble, weep, and howl, all ye that are going on in the broad way to destruction, for the miseries that shall come upon you, except you repent, God spared not the Angels that sinned, God spared not the Old World, God spared not *Sodom* and *Gomorah*, multitudes, multitudes are already in Hell, for the same sins that you are guilty of, and if you do not now seek the Lord and make peace with him in Christ; shall you escape?

It is time, high time to seek the Lord, to make supplication to your judge, through the Advocate for sinners, Jesus Christ before all this misery come upon you.

But may some say we do not love to hear so much of Hell and damnation, it is a terror to us.

Answer, did not Christ in his doctrine tell the people much of Hell and damnation? *Mat. 5. 20, 30. Luke. 16. 19. 20. 21. 22. 23. And thrice in five verses he uses that terrible expression to set forth the misery of Hell that their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched, Mark. 9. 44, 45, 46, 47, 48.*

Surely

Surely Christ knew how to preach, and surely he is the best pattern of preaching, and you see he spake much of Hell in his doctrine. Mat. 24. 51. Mat. 25. 41, 46.

Indeed most people are like those of old, who said to the seers see not, and to the prophets prophesy not, prophesy not unto us right things, prophesy unto us smooth things *Isa. 30. 16.* As if men should say let us go on quietly to Hell, I pray do not trouble our consciencies, we will venture our Souls, and if we do come to Hell at last we must bear it as well as we can. I but if the Lord intend to make you his people, he will not suffer you to go on in such a desperate way, but he will make you willing to hear of your danger, and make you to enquire in good earnest how you may escape it, yea you shall bless the Lord that ever you came to see into what a gulph and bottomless pit you were falling, that so you might seek for help and salvation in Christ the Mediatour.

All that hath been said to shew men the certainty, the misery, and the eternity, of Hell is that they may avoid it, and may never come into that place of torment. And let all know that though the Doctrine of Hell is to be urged unto men, to awaken them, yet Ministers are not to stop there, but to hold forth

forth Christ as an object of faith to them that they may look to him and be saved. The terrors of the Law are not to be preached simply for themselves, as it were to torment men before the time, but for another end to shew them their need of Christ, and that they may prize him and beleive on him to everlasting Life; Ministers cannot speak to much of Hell, if withal they held forth Christ as he that delivereth from that wrath to come. The hearing of Hell is useful, even to those that are in Christ that they may be continually praying God that hath delievered them from going down to that pit: whatsoever afflictions and chastnings they have here.

He that only tells people of Hell and damnation is a meer legal preacher but he that shews men first their miserable and lost estate in themselves, and then holds forth Christ to them as a Saviour and ransom for their souls is the right Gospel preacher.

As I have spoken of the judgment, and fiery indignation of God that shall consume those that die in their sins so let me shew how we may be delivered from this wrath to come, and so make an end.

The Gospel taken in a strict sense is meerly the good news and glad tidings (glad tidings

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ings indeed) of a Saviour for lost sinners. A wonderfull thing indeed is the Gospel, it holdeth forth such a way of justifying sinners as could never have entred into the heart of Man to conceive, if the Lord had not revealed it. It shews us wonder upon wonder, God was manifest in the flesh; that is one great mystery and wonder of the Gospel what a condescension and humbling of himself was this. That Jesus Christ took upon him our Nature, our flesh, not in appearance but really, not to lay it down soon again, but Uniting it to his God-head for ever, to be sure it was to do a great work, that Angels and Men shall admire to eternity, that God was manifest in the flesh. This is such a wonder that when it is deeply weighed doth overfet the Spirit of Man.

This mighty one the Son of God, not by constraint but willingly died for sinners, had our iniquities laid upon him, Isa. 53. 6. Bare the punishment of them, 1 Pet. 2. 24. This was the cause of his bitter passion of all his inward and outward sufferings. The Jews crucified him as if he had been an evil doer but Christ knew what was the Fathers meaning, and his own (viz) that he should suffer and be crucified because they, in whose stead he suffered, were really evil doers, sinners, and had deserved all that he underwent for them. Thus he

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that was perfectly just suffered in the room of the unjust, A surety paid the great debt that others had contracted; There is a wonderful mystery in the death of Christ, He died as the Second Adam, as a mediator, as a publick person for his people, for this cause he came into the World, for this cause he laid down his life, else these things had never been.

This Jesus, God man, mighty, to suffer, bare that punishment due to our sins; which if it had been laid upon us would have been eternal, but he overwrestled it, made satisfaction, put away sin by the sacrifice of himself, made peace and obtained eternal redemption for us whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that after he had the iniquities of all his people laid and charged upon him, yet he rose again the third day, is gone unto the Father and is set down at the right hand of the Majesty in the Heavens. By one offering upon the Cross he did the work, he being an infinite Person, God as well as Man, his short suffering was of an infinit value. He dieth no more, there is no need at all of it, in referance unto those, for whom he made his soul an offering for sins, he hath done the work fully, to whom be glory for ever.

This is the Summ and substance of the Gospel. Now if any hearing of the danger they are in of the wrath of God, for their sins
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and sensible of the Rebellion and perverseness of their hearts and wayes against God, would have a Saviour and a sanctifier that it may go well with them for ever, this is he, Jesus the Son of God. He is not here now upon earth to be seen with bodily eyes, he is gone into Heaven and is on the right hand of God. Look up to him there with an eye of Faith, put your trust in him, he is able to save to the uttermost all that come to God by him. Get the knowledge of him out of the word, search the Scriptures for they testify of him, they tell you what he is, what he hath done, and what he hath suffered to bring us to God. Think of him continually, prize him, set your hearts on him, if you slight him, you will find there is no other Saviour, no other Mediatour, no other advocate with the Father.

If the work be yet to be done, even now whilst thou readeest these things look to him, close with him, give up thy self to him to be saved and Sanctified by him, fall in love with him, you will never repent of your choice. Poor soul, what saist thou to a Pardon for all thy sins? what saist thou to peace with God? what saist thou to eternal life? Come to Christ and thou shalt have all these, and a New Heart and spirit to walk in holiness and obedience before God too. O doth the Lord affect thy heart (for he

doth this great work) that thou art taken with Christ, and art a thirst for this water of life; then take it freely, as excellent and precious as the Lord Jesus is, he bestowes himself freely upon poor sinners; the best qualification you can have for receiving Christ is to see your need of him; and that you are altogether unworthy of him, do you see your sins now, the multitude of them, the hainousness of them, let not your sins drive you from Christ, but drive you to Christ. Come, poor sinners, come to Christ his blood cleanseth from all sin, his righteousness is able to cover all your unrighteousness. Come to Christ but with a true Heart, to give him all the glory of your salvation, and to desire now to have him reign over you, and fear not he is mighty to save. Jesus is the Lord of glory, consider his God-head in your looking to him to take away your sins. Never any Patient came to this Physitian and missed of cure, come with all the spiritual Ulcers running Sores and Bloody Issues of sin, touch the hem of his Garment by Faith (as the Woman in the Gospel did) and you shall see there is vertue enough in Christ to make you whole.

The Devil labours to make men confident and presumptuous, when they are going on greedily

to the Reader.

dily in sin, but when they are convinced of their lost estate and are looking after Christ, then he endeavours to puzzle them with many doubts and suspicions as if they were past cure, and it were too late now to look after Christ. Ah poor souls do not you see that the hand of Satan is in all this. When you went on in ignorance and prophaneſs, he would not endure you ſhould hear, when Miniſters preached of damnation, and now that you are convinced and ſtopt in your vile courſes, and are thinking how you may make peace with God, now the Devil cannot endure you ſhould hear of Salvation in Chriſt the Son of God, leaſt you ſhould come unto him that you may have life.

Thus I have ſet before them that are not yet converted life and death pardon of ſin, peace with God and eternal life, if the Lord giveth them hearts to repent and cloſe with Chriſt, The Wrath of God and eternal deſtruction; *If they ſtill go on in their ignorance, prophaneſs, and ſlighting of Jeſus Chriſt, If any that read theſe things ſhall ſay in their hearts, they ſhall have peace and ſhall do well enough (whatſoever ſome zealous preachers ſay) though they caſt Gods law behind their backs, and never look after a work of Grace, and converſi-*
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on upon their souls, the anger of the Lord and his Jealousy shall smoake against those persons, and burn against them for ever. But if they shall now tremble at the word of the Lord, and lay hold upon the offer of Christ; believing on his name, and submitting unto him; their sins shall be forgiven them, for his names sake, and they shall be the heir of eternal life through him, for though the wages of sin is death even eternal death, yet the gift the free gift of God is life even eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom be glory for ever.
Amen.

FINIS.

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F I N I S.